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Email: dharma@dvk.in

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REJECTION OF RELIGIOUS PHENOMENON IN KANT AND ITS REHABILITATION BY MARION

George Kulangara◆

1. Introduction

When philosophy turns its critical investigation towards religion, the philosopher has an unenviable task at hand. For, religion presents a veritable minefield of issues before which philosophy betrays its impotence. Religious phenomena like supernatural revelation, the Transcendent, etc. are not objects proper to philosophy at all if Kant has his way regarding the conditions of the possibility of experience of objects. Much of what goes on under religion should then be treated in history, sociology and psychology of religion and not in philosophy of religion. Kant held that any prospective candidate of phenomenon should appear in space and time as well as be guided by the categories of understanding. This is to say that a phenomenon should don an empirical garb. Kant is loath to yield an inch to so-called supra-empirical phenomena that crowd the domain of religion. "He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him" (John 1:11) – this Johannine regret referring to the rejection of Jesus at the hands of Jewish authorities as well as common people gives expression to the rejection of the claims of religious phenomena of all hues at the doorstep of critical philosophy of Kantian strand.

Kant has mandated that any self-claimed *religious* phenomenon should first attest its credentials of phenomenality, i.e., its right to appear. In recent times, it is Jean-Luc Marion who has taken up the cudgels on behalf of religious phenomena. He concedes that in a strictly Kantian framework, "religious phenomenon ... amounts to an impossible phenomenon, or at least it marks the limit starting from which the phenomenon is in general no longer possible."[1] With unmistakable Johannine overtones, Marion laid bare the predicament that the religious phenomena were in: Religious phenomenon was "a phenomenon ... that

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◆**Dr. George Kulangara CMI** is a Kant scholar with a Licentiate in Philosophy from Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. Currently he is a resident staff member of Darsana Institute of Philosophy, Wardha, Maharashtra.

[1] Jean-Luc Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," in *Phenomenology and the 'Theological Turn': The French Debate*, Dominique Janicaud, et. al., eds., New York: Fordham University Press, 2000, 176.

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the world could not accept... Having come among its own, they did not recognize it; having come into phenomenality, the absolutely saturated phenomenon could find no room there for its display."[2] The predicament was that since a religious phenomenon was a transcendent phenomenon, transcending the legitimate bounds of appearing, it was an impossible phenomenon. Marion's strategy, as Robyn Horner points out, was to show that "phenomenology contains the possibility of referring to the impossible" since it is no less than "a radical thought of transcendence."[3]

Simply put, Marion wants to show the possibility of religious phenomenon. This is too grandiose a task that is easier said than achieved. Hence Marion proceeds in steps. Marion starts with the admission that inquiry into the possibility of a religious phenomenon should begin first by showing the possibility of phenomenon, that is, any phenomenon. On further reflection he concludes that "The question concerning the possibility of the phenomenon implies the question of the phenomenon of possibility."[4] This brings Marion to taking a close look on Kant. Kant may be accused of closing the doors of philosophy before the transcendent phenomena of religion. Strange as it may seem, it is in Kant's philosophy itself that Marion looks for and indeed finds the key to unlock the doors for religious phenomena.

2. The Phenomenon of Possibility

In Kant's definition of the modality category of possibility, Marion finds hints for the development of a full-fledged phenomenology of religion. For Kant, "That which agrees with the formal conditions of experience, that is, with the conditions of intuition and of concepts, is *possible*."[5]

Marion finds Kant's definition of possibility helpful for his own project in dual modes. In a positive mode, Marion finds in the definition an intimate tie between possibility and phenomenality which he seeks to take advantage of. In a negative mode, on the other hand, Marion discerns that the definition limits any phenomenon to humans' finite power of knowing.

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[2] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 208.

[3] Robyn Horner, "The Betrayal of Transcendence" in *Transcendence: Philosophy, Literature, and Theology Approach the Beyond*, Regina Schwartz, ed., New York/ London: Routledge, 2004, 63.

[4] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 177.

[5] A 218/ B 265(References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the paginations of the first (1781) and second (1787) editions, indicated as "A" and "B," respectively. The text used is, Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

3. Phenomenal as the Only Possible

The possibility of a thing, as the definition shows, is tied to its phenomenality. This is what is said when the definition stipulates that to be possible a thing should agree with the formal condition of intuition which is always sensible. In other words, to be possible one should appear. But why this privileging of intuition over the concept? Marion is quick to point out that this privileging is very much inherent in Kant himself.

> Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding none would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is thus just as necessary to make the mind's concepts sensible (i.e., to add an object to them in intuition) as it is to make its intuitions understandable (i.e., to bring them under concepts).[6]

It is not to be denied that both concept (thought) and intuition (content) are *conditio sine qua non* for knowledge. Think of two cases in which concept and intuition are respectively absent. Kant called the one without concept blind while the one without intuition empty. Marion uses this unevenness between concept and intuition to assert that "[i]n the realm of the phenomenon, the intuition, rather than the concept, is king."[7] He elaborates:

> To be sure, the intuition remains empty, but blindness is worth more here than vacuity: for even blinded the intuition remains one that gives, whereas the concept, even if it alone can allow to be seen what would first be given to it, remains as such perfectly empty, and therefore just as well incapable of seeing anything at all. Intuition without the concept, even though still blind, nevertheless already gives matter to an object; whereas the concept without intuition, although not blind, nevertheless no longer sees anything, since nothing has yet been given to it to be seen.[8]

Marion sees no arbitrariness in the privileging of the intuition. Terming the intuition 'pure givenness,' Marion argues that "[b]eing, appearing, effecting, or affecting become possible and thinkable only if they happen, before each and every specification of their respective venues, first as pure givennesses… Nothing arises that is not given."[9]

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[6] A 51/ B 75.

[7] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 190-1.

[8] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 190.

[9] Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, 54.

4. Possibility of Phenomenon as Tied to the Finite Power of Knowing

Marion is all praise for Kant as far as the privileging of the intuition goes. However, it is a different story thereafter. That the possibility is tied to phenomenality, that is, to the givenness of a thing, is not the whole story of phenomenological experience. Kant's definition of possibility has an important clause which is not to be overlooked. He stipulates that only such an experience is possible "which agrees with the *formal conditions* of experience." With the clause "formal conditions of experience" Kant ties phenomenality to humans' power of knowing. This is a well-founded inference given Kant's explanation that the categories of modality (and the category of possibility is one of them) "express only the relation (of the concepts) to the faculty of cognition" (A 219/ B 266).

The tying of the possibility of phenomenon to the power of knowing results in huge consequences. The phenomenon loses its independence in appearing. Its fortunes are wedded to human mind's power to know. Every phenomenon is reduced to a "conditional phenomenon." And a greater paradox is that the condition for it is put forth by a mind that itself does not appear. "[T]he possibility of appearing never belongs to what appears, nor phenomenality to the phenomenon."[10] Marion argues that this outsourcing of the phenomenon's condition to appear to a total outsider, namely a mind, is not unique to Kant. Before him, Leibniz had worked out a similar paradox with his principle of sufficient reason. Leibniz had determined that any possible phenomenon should attest a sufficient reason to appear before the tribunal of an infinite mind. "[N]othing is done without sufficient reason, that is, that nothing happens without it being possible for the one who sufficiently knows things to give a Reason that suffices to determine why it is so and not otherwise."[11]

The conditioning of phenomenon whereby its possibility is conditional to an agency outside it brings grave difficulties to philosophy of religion. When the phenomenon concerned is a Transcendent phenomenon, will it, in appearing, even with its overwhelming infinitude, have to measure up to the conditions set by a finite mind? Precisely that is what Kant demands. Precisely because God cannot be subsumed under the conditions of the finite mind, Kant keeps God eternally waiting outside, knocking at the doors of the finite human mind. W. H. Walsh explains the constraints Kant had when faced with the issue of the phenomenon of God. "As for the suggestion that God can be experienced directly, it is clear that

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[10] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 179.

[11] Quoted in Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 178.

Kant would not have accepted it." This was because Kant had concluded that "no fact could be established by mere intuition, since 'with us men' all knowledge demands conceptual as well as interpretative elements."[12] Remember for Kant "intuitions without concept are blind" (A 51/ B 75).

Intuition or the givenness of the phenomenon is not supreme. It has to play second fiddle to the knowing subject. This tyrannical subjugation of the phenomenon by the finite subject is the greatest paradox in the philosophy of religion. When the finite subject extends its tyrannical subjugation even to an infinite and transcendent phenomenon, the paradox becomes surreal. Such a paradox cannot be avoided since, as Marion notes, "the principle of the *donating* intuition does not authorize the absolutely unconditioned appearance, and thus the freedom of the phenomenon that gives itself on the basis of itself."[13]

By all accounts, the relation between the infinite phenomenon and the finite knower is grossly asymmetrical. Naturally the phenomenon suffers distorted recognition or even rejection at the tribunal of the knower, given the restricting and restraining transcendental conditions under which the knower has to function. The subject with its transcendental conditions of possible experience forbids a free appearing of the phenomenon. "It is forbidden to appear!" asserts Marion and thinks of ways to recuperate the phenomenon from the structures of the transcendental ego.[14]

Marion marks out three phases in any phenomenological experience in each of which the asymmetry plays out: the shortage of intuition, the limits sets by a horizon, and the phenomenon-constituting I.

4.1. The Shortage of Intuition

Experience is in Kantian understanding the result of interplay between the concept and sense content or intention and intuition. For the experience to be complete or truth to be whole the exchange between the intention and intuition should be adequate; the intuition or the given should adequately fulfil the concept. Essentially, however, Kant ruled out any adequation as far as human experience was concerned since, we, humans, are entitled only to a finite (i.e., sensible) intuition. "We should … know only our mode of intuition, that is, our sensibility. We should, indeed, know it completely, but always under the conditions of space and time – conditions which are originally inherent in the subject."[15]

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[12] W. H. Walsh, *Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics*, Edinburgh: University Press, 1997, 221.

[13] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 181.

[14] Marion, "Metaphysics and Phenomenology: A Summary for Theologians," in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, G. Ward, ed., Oxford: Blackwell, 1997, 289.

The subject's knowing powers are inherently limited. Its finitude vetoes the infinitude of the giving phenomenon. This alters the harmony. Intuition is no more the king; intention is. The finitude of sensible intuition in humans can never do justice to the given. "The senses deceive, not with a provisional or accidental deception, but with an ineluctable powerlessness: even an indefinite sum of intuitioned adumbrations will never fulfil the lowest level of intentionality aiming at real objects."[16] Our sensible intuition suffers from the limitations spatiality and temporality engender. What we perceive is characterised by here, there or somewhere (never an everywhere) and by now, then or sometime (never an always). "[I]ntuition is characterised by scarcity, obeys a logic of shortage, and is stigmatized by an indelible insufficiency."[17]

4.2. The Limits Set by a Horizon

As if the logic of shortage that our finite intuition suffers is not enough to checkmate many a phenomenon from appearing, Marion discerns another limiting factor in phenomenology. This is the limit set by a horizon. Any new experience we may have is received into the canvas of the previous experiences. Our consciousness to which any phenomenon appears is a coloured consciousness, coloured by all that have appeared to it previously. If to appear, a phenomenon has to appear to this canvas of consciousness. "Within the horizon, the unknown refers in advance to the known" since the "intention always anticipates what it has not yet seen, the result being that the unseen has, from the start, the rank of a pre-seen."[18] The horizon is, in the language of Robyn Horner, "a border … that fences an economy of thought and action."[19] The net result is that all seeing is a prejudiced, prejudged seeing and there is a "forbidding (of) all genuinely new arising."[20]

4.3. The Phenomenon-Constituting I

Thirdly and more unsettling from the point of the phenomenon's right to appear on its own terms, there is the all-pervading transcendental *I* which, rather than passively receiving the phenomenon, in fact, goes out to actively constitute it. "[T]he givenness of a phenomenon on its own basis to an *I* can always veer toward a constitution of the phenomenon by and on the basis of the *I*."[21] Any thing in being experienced as an object becomes an object of and for a subject. In this self-transfer, it will have lost considerable originality it may have had. The loss of originality is only inevitable since the *I* does not go out of itself to meet the phenomenon in the latter's horizon; rather, it receives the phenomenon within a horizon which is originally its own. Ultimately, a sort of reducibility marks the phenomenon since "transcendental or not, the phenomenological *I* remains the beneficiary, and therefore the witness and even the judge, of the given appearance; it falls to the *I* to measure what does and does not give itself intuitively, within what limits, according to what horizon, following what intention, essence, and signification."[22] In short, the appearing phenomenon, once in the tribunal of the knowing subject, is constituted by it.

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[15] A 43/ B 60.

[16] Marion, *Being Given*, 192.

[17] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 181.

[18] Marion, *Being Given*, 186.

[19] Horner, "The Betrayal of Transcendence," 66.

[20] Marion, *Being Given*, 187.

The aforementioned three-fold restrictions subject a phenomenon to three-fold limitations that render it a poor phenomenon – a) it suffers from a poverty of intuition. It is not able to satisfy expectations of an intending subject; b) it is restricted by the pre-defined horizon that the subject brings; and c) its status is relative to the intending subject which masters and even constitutes it. This three-fold phenomenological conditioning ensured that every phenomenon remains essentially a poor phenomenon. This forestalled any religious project in phenomenology. The religious domain claimed to have unconditioned and absolute phenomena. How could an unconditioned and absolute phenomenon give itself to the constituting faculties of a finite subject?

Marion's strategy to let religious phenomena, which are irreducible and unconditioned quite contrary to a poor phenomenon, into philosophy involved two steps: first is a hypothesis that "unconditioned and irreducible phenomena would become possible only if a non-finite intuition ensured their donation."[23] Second is his conclusive assertion that there are instances of such non-finite intuitions which he called "saturated phenomenon."

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[21] Marion, *Being Given*, 187.

[22] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 183.

[23] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 194.

5. Religious Phenomena as Saturated Phenomena

Marion asks,

> To the phenomenon that is most often characterized by a defect of intuition, and therefore by a deception of the intentional aim and, in particular instances, by the equality between intuition and intention, why would there not correspond the possibility of a phenomenon in which intuition would give *more, indeed immeasurably more*, than intention ever would have intended or foreseen?"[24]

Marion grants the possibility of such a phenomenon. What chiefly characterizes such a phenomenon is its surplus of intuition in the place of the shortage of intuition of the common phenomena. Precisely with this surplus intuition, it stifles the conditioning agency of the finite, knowing subject. "Such a phenomenon will doubtless no longer allow the constitution of an object, at least in the Kantian sense."[25] Religious phenomenon is no object at all. Even if it is, it is something that calls the subjectivity of the knowing subject into question. Marion takes the Kantian route itself to explain it, although in a way that lays bare the inherent limitations of the Kantian way itself.

Kant had held that merely by a pure givenness of sensible intuition, we cannot know. Without concepts, intuition remains blind. Pure concepts of understanding which Kant called categories are required to make the otherwise disparate sense-content knowable. "[F]or by them alone can it *understand* anything in the manifold of intuition, that is, think an object of intuition" (A 80/ B 106). Categories are devices through which the subject constitutes its object in experience. Marion's contention is that faced with a saturated phenomenon, these categories become powerless. Kant classified the twelve categories under four groups on the basis of the way they functioned, i.e., categories of quantity, quality, relation and modality. Marion's point is that under the weight of the overwhelming saturation of the intuition, the categories far from assisting the subject in constituting the object, leaves the subject high and dry; further still, they end up in letting the subject itself constituted.

6. Categories of Quantity and Incommensurability of Saturated Phenomenon

According to Kant, the role of the categories of quantity in the act of knowing comes as assistance by way of making possible a representation of the whole on the basis of the representation of its parts (A 162/ B 203).

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[24] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 195.

[25] Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," 197.

This possibility of representing the whole even before one has actually seen each and every part of the whole attaches a characteristic of foreseeability and predictability to our experience.

Marion tries to show that as far as the saturated phenomenon is concerned, the categories of quantity fail to comprehend it. The intuition that gives the saturated phenomenon exceeds every concept that tries to comprehend it so that it "can neither be divided nor adequately put together again by virtue of a finite magnitude homogeneous with finite parts."[26] The saturated phenomenon is immense and hence immeasurable; since immeasurable, it is also unforeseeable. We cannot foresee, anticipate, measure and aim at a saturated phenomenon. By its sheer immensity, it exceeds all our measures. It is incommensurable. Since we fail to measure it, it amazes us. Marion says that although we do not see all that the saturated phenomenon shows, yet what little is seen is "imposed on us with a power such that we are submerged by what shows itself, most likely to the point of fascination."[27] Here we can unmistakably trace a lineage to Rudolf Otto's description of religious experience as *tremendum et fascinans*.

7. Categories of Quality and Unbearability of Saturated Phenomenon

In the Kantian scheme, whereas the categories of quantity dealt with the extensive magnitude of an intuited thing by means of the representation of the whole of its finite parts, the categories of quality deal with the intensive magnitude. By intensive magnitude Kant means "a degree of influence (of sensation) on the sense" (A 166/ B 208). The quality or the intensity of an intuition can vary from zero (in which case there is almost a lack of intuition) to a higher measure (which can be marked by a higher digit).

When the question is about the intuition of a saturated phenomenon, Marion says that it "attains an intensive magnitude without measure, or common measure, such that starting with a certain degree, the intensity of the real intuition passes beyond all the conceptual anticipations of perception." Besides, the perception "can no longer bear its most elevated degrees."[28] Our senses can no longer stand the severity of the intuition coming from its excess. It is like going blind gazing at the midday sun. This blindness is not to be equated with not seeing; it is rather the suffering caused by the too much seeing. "[N]ot bearing is not simply equivalent to not seeing… It concerns a visible that our gaze cannot sustain."[29] We can in this context refer to Biblical paradigms. "Go away from me, Lord,"[30] pleads Peter with Jesus when Jesus' divinity is revealed in the miraculous catch of fish. Peter is just not able to cope up with what he sees.

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[26] Marion, *Being Given*, 200.
[27] Marion, *Being Given*, 200.
[28] Marion, *Being Given*, 203.

Kant held that an experience of object and hence its constitution is possible only if the intensity of its perception takes place on a measurable scale somewhere between the degrees of zero and maximum. Once the intensity of the intuition exceeds the maximum, and hence the measurable parameters, there is no constitution of object possible. "For … there is always a maximum, a threshold of tolerance beyond which what is seen is no longer constituted as an object within a finite horizon."[31] The absolutely unconditioned and irreducible phenomenon of religion has a paradoxical dimension in that when it gives itself to humans who are finite, their finite horizon of knowledge ruptures under the weight of the excessively given.

8. Categories of Relation and Absoluteness of Saturated Phenomenon

Kant saw relation as a transcendental condition for the constitution of experience. "Experience is possible only through the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions" (A 176/ B 218). He found the representation as working out in three modes: relation of inherence of accidents in a substance, of causality between cause and effect, and of reciprocity between substances within a community. These three modes of relation form a network within which alone an experience becomes possible. In other words, this is a site or horizon within which every phenomenon should appear. Kant will not consider a happening outside this network as an experience at all.

Marion questions such a demarcation of finite, inviolable boundaries for any experience. "Is it legitimate," he asks, "to rule out the possibility that a phenomenon might impose itself on perception without assigning it either a substance in which it resides like an accident or a cause from which it results as an effect, or even less an interactive *commercium* where it is relativized?"[32] Any phenomenon that shows itself within a boundaried framework is already relativised and conditioned by that framework. It is already situated in a site or, as in Kantian language, constituted as an object by a transcendental subject within the latter's horizon of already lived experiences. Marion asserts that a transcendent and unconditioned phenomenon is an "unforeseeable phenomenon (in terms of the past), not exhaustively comprehensible (in terms of the present), (and) not reproducible (in terms of the future) and therefore defies every limit of a preconceived horizon. As defying every limit and as unyielding to every condition, it is absolute and therefore dissimilar to anything else.[33]

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[29] Marion, *Being Given*, 203.

[30] Gospel of Luke, 5:8.

[31] Marion, *Being Given*, 206.

[32] Marion, *Being Given*, 207.

Then, not only no single horizon, but no combination of horizons, could successfully tolerate the absoluteness of the phenomenon, precisely because it gives itself as absolute, that is to say, free from all analogy with common-law phenomena and from all predetermination a network of relations, with neither precedent nor antecedent in the already seen or foreseeable.[34] A religious phenomenon being a saturated phenomenon is dissimilar to any ordinary phenomena in our horizon of knowledge. However we may search, we will fail to find analogies for it in our framework of already lived experiences. Not surprising, then, that we are not able to house it in the world of our experience. The unconditioned, religious phenomenon suffers an epistemological rejection at the doorstep of our world of knowledge.

9. Categories of Modality and Irregardability of Saturated Phenomenon

The categories of modality concern the relation of the object with the various faculties of the subject that knows it. "The categories of modality … express … only how the object, together with all its determinations, is related to understanding and its empirical employment, to empirical judgment, and to reason in its application to experience" (A 219/ B 266). In other words, the categories of modality determine the agreeability of the object to the subject. An object that fails to conform to the requirements of the knowing subject is denied access to the domain of experience. What is important to note here is that in the dynamics between the knowing subject and the thing, the balance is heavily tilted in favour of the subject. Phenomenologically, there is the reduction of the phenomenon to the *I* (the subject). The phenomenon loses its autonomy and undergoes "alienation from itself" since it "lets itself be constituted (constructed, schematized, synthesized, etc.) by whoever precedes and foresees it."[35] Kant had with his idea of transcendental apperception ensured the precedence of the knowing subject over everything it will ever know.

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[33] Marion is pleased with Spinoza's conception of only One Substance. Since it absorbs into itself every possible determination of beingness, it drowns all finite horizons of Cartesian metaphysics. The therefrom emerging Being defying all finite determinations can be deemed as an example of a saturated phenomenon. See Marion, *Being Given*, 210.

[34] Marion, *Being Given*, 211.

[35] Marion, *Being Given*, 213.

> Now no cognition can occur in us, no connection and unity among them, without that unity of consciousness that precedes all data of the intuitions, and in relation to which all representation of objects is alone possible. This pure, original, unchanging consciousness I call *transcendental apperception* (A 107).

The saturated phenomenon, on the other hand, in virtue of its absoluteness refuses to let itself be measured or relativised by the subject. It thereby questions any claim of precedence the subject may make over it. If the subject cannot precede it, neither can the subject constitute it. "The saturated phenomenon contradicts the subjective conditions of experience precisely in that it does not admit constitution as an object. In other words, though exemplarily visible, it nevertheless cannot be looked at, regarded."[36] Marion uses the word "regard" in a unique sense that its French root *regarder* allows, namely, "to keep" or "to guard." That the saturated phenomenon cannot be regarded would then mean that the subject cannot keep it in its custody; the subject does not precede or constitute the object. In short, the unconditioned, irreducible phenomenon by its incommensurability, unbearability, absoluteness and irregardability makes impotent all claims to precedence, metaphysical or epistemological, by a finite subject like the *I* of Descartes' "I think" or Kant's Transcendental *I*.

10. Conclusion

What Marion wants to prove by showing the futility of Kantian categories and the knowing subject's epistemological anteriority is that as far as a transcendent phenomenon is concerned, a theoretical experience of it is not possible. He is not however denying a phenomenological experience of the Transcendent. The Transcendent shows itself; it does appear; it does become a phenomenon. But it should be received outside the canvas of the theoretical horizon. It should be thought otherwise than metaphysical categories like being. Denying him access holding the transcendental conditions of experience as sacrosanct Marion finds intriguing. Whatever the case might be, there is nothing astonishing in the fact that one inquires after Gods' right to inscribe himself within phenomenology. What is astonishing is that one should be stubborn … about denying him this right, or rather that one is no longer even surprised by this pigheaded refusal.[37]

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[36] Marion, *Being Given*, 214.

[37] Marion, *Being Given*, 243.

What do we make of the phenomenon of the Transcendent if it appears counter to the conditions of the possibility of experience? Kant would say that there is no "experience" at all. The transcendental *I* cannot open its doors to let the Transcendent enter the world of experience. Marion goes a step further and speak of a "counter-experience." "Counter-experience is not equivalent to a nonexperience, but … offers the experience of what irreducibly contradicts the conditions for the experience of objects."[38] The Transcendent can be experienced only as a counter-experience because a paradox marks its experience: "the I cannot not see it, but it cannot any longer gaze at it as its mere object. It has the eye to see but not keep it." We have an intuition of the Transcendent but nevertheless because of the superabundance of its intuitive givenness, it is "blurred by the too narrow aperture, the too short lens, the too cramped frame, that receives it."[39] Before the Transcendent can be "experienced" in this sort of counter-experience, the transcendental *I* should surrender all its tools of constituting object of experience. In the aftermath of this counter-experience, the *I* becomes *me*, constituted by the Transcendent and not constituting it. "The nominative gives way decidedly to that which … appears to be an accusative case."[40] Vis-à-vis the truth, the *I* is not its knower, nor its maker, but merely a "witness."[41] The experience of God is given not to the *I* that knows, but to the *me* that is known by God.

Marion allows God a grand entry into philosophy, not, however, through the doors of knowledge, but through the doors of prayer. In this Marion is offering a phenomenology of prayer. For, he takes phenomenology as the way forward for philosophy. In God we have a phenomenon which our mind or theoretical reason cannot handle because it is a phenomenon that bedazzles and blinds us on account of its phenomenological excess. In our considering this phenomenon, God enters philosophy. But what precisely is this God? What is his name? Marion is clear and direct. In this way of philosophizing on God, we suffer an inability of naming God. Rather, we undergo a baptism whereby we receive a name. The new philosophy leads us to a "baptism, where, far from our attributing to God a name intelligible to us, we enter into his unpronounceable name, in order to receive by surplus our name."[42] "[P]redication must yield to praise," says Marion prescribing a new way for philosophy of religion.[43] Praise, because here the one who prays is overwhelmed by what he experiences and becomes completely passive. Commenting on Marion's conception of prayer, Geschwandtner says that it "merely serves as a name for the awe inspired by the unnameable and as a way of claiming that such awe is no longer predicative."[44] Prayer does not predicate the one to whom it is addressed. This unnameability is very much in tune with the general trend of Marion's thought because according to him, a God-phenomenon that can be named and made an object of our intentionality can no longer serve as a God of religion.

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[38] Marion, *Being Given*, 215.

[39] Marion, *Being Given*, 215.

[40] Marion, "The Final Appeal of the Subject" in *The Religious*, John D. Caputo, ed., Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, 137.

[41] Marion, *Being Given*, 217.

In Marion's conception of prayer, there is a complete reversal of intentionality. Prayer accordingly is not a domain where *we* experience God; it is, rather, a domain where God experiences *us*. In the words of Jean-Louis Chretien, prayer "is the act by which the one praying stands in the presence of a being he believes but does not see and manifests himself to it. If it corresponds to a theophany, it is first of all an anthropophany, a manifestation of man."[45] There is a manifestation of human being as wanting in his/her cognitive faculties and hence finite. In other words, even after God has entered philosophy, human being is not cognitively better informed about God. What can be claimed, rather, is that s/he is more informed about oneself. In short, God enters when we admit our finitude and forgo our intentionality and our horizon determined by the categories of our understanding. Rejection of God from certain philosophical quarters meant, according to Marion, only "the failure of the metaphysical concept of God" which he sought to correct by his attempt "to bring out the absolute freedom of God with regard to all determinations."[46]

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[42] Marion, *In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena*, Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud, trans., New York: Fordham University Press, 2002, 157.

[43] Marion, *God without Being*, 106.

[44] Christina M. Geschwandtner, "Praise: Pure and Simple? Jean-Luc Marion's Phenomenologies of Prayer" in *The Phenomenology of Prayer*, Bruce Ellis Benson and Norman Wirzba, eds., New York: Fordham University Press, 2005, 171-2.

[45] Jean-Louis Chretien, "The Wounded Word: The Phenomenology of Prayer" in *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate*, Dominique Janicaud, et. al. eds., 149-50.

[46] Marion, *God without Being*, Thomas A. Carlson, trans., Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991, xx-xxi.

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FUNDAMENTALISM
The Only Way to Redeem Religious Ethics?

Shaji George Kochuthara◆

1. Introduction

Both modernism and Post-modernism have challenged religion and religious ethics. Modernism – which is a continuation of the Enlightenment and humanism – made the human, who is rational, autonomous and self-determining, the centre and measure of everything. Modernism's emphasis on the power of reason and an all-powerful scientific knowledge pushed religion and religious ethics into the periphery, making it something inferior and superfluous. Post-modernity with its rejection of any system, structure, order and control and with its conception of everything as provisional has challenged again the validity of religious ethics which often speak about norms and values which are perennial and which have universal validity.[1] The Post-modernist era is sometimes described as Post-religious and Post-moral. Liberalism and neo-liberalism promoted by modernism and post-modernism defend unlimited individual liberty, emancipation of the individual from beliefs which are not rationally proved, and liberation from religious and political authorities.[2]

Globalization, often described as an economic system, is also a social, political and cultural phenomenon and influences every aspect of human life. It is an "interlocking mosaic of structures that are transforming human relationships at an almost unimaginable speed."[3] "Globalization is

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◆**Dr. Shaji George Kochuthara** holds a doctorate in Moral Theology from the Gregorian University, Rome and teaches Moral Theology at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore. He is also the director of Centre for Women Studies (DVK) and a member of Institutional Ethics Review Board (St. John's Medical College, Bangalore). His publications include *The Concept of Sexual Pleasure in the Catholic Moral Tradition* (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2007). He is also the Chief Editor of *Asian Horizons: Dharmaram Journal of Theology*.

[1] Stanislaus Swamikannu, "Postmodernism," in *ACPI Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 2, Johnson J. Puthenpurackal, ed., Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2010, 1061-1066.

[2] Girma Mohammed, "Fundamentalism versus Liberalism: Towards a Hermeneutical Turn to Ethics," in *Overcoming Fundamentalism*, Heidi Hadsell and Christoph Stückelberger, eds., Geneva: Globethics.net, 2009, 37.

[3] Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, "Globalization and Religion from an Indonesian Perspective," in *Overcoming Fundamentalism*, 90.

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the 'mother of all megatrends,' in the sense that it has become a catchall designation for the accelerating global integration of economics, politics, culture, communications, spirituality, and virtually everything else that matters."[4] Though it has its own merits, Globalization has been criticized for its monolithic approach to cultures and has its share in challenging the foundations of religion and religious ethics. Many see globalization as a fundamentalist religion of consumerism and a new form of idolatry,[5] though others may disagree with such a view. As a cultural phenomenon, globalization has connected different cultures and brought about greater communication and exchange among them. At the same time, many cultures in Asia, Africa and Latin America – the so called third world – find globalization as a threat to their very existence. That is why many indigenous groups and nationalist movements especially in Asia try to present globalization as a Western or Christian attempt in disguise to conquer them again and destroy them. Consequently, even if there may be openness to the economic possibilities offered by globalization, there is resistance from different cultures. Moreover, many are sceptical about the economic and market agenda of globalization.

Does it mean that religion and religious ethics have become insignificant in the post-modern world of globalization? In the new preface to his book, *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*, reprinted after September 11, 2001, Karen Armstrong says:

> In the middle of the twentieth century, it was generally assumed by pundits and commentators that secularism was the coming ideology and that religion would never again become a force in international affairs. But the fundamentalists have reversed this trend and gradually, in both the United States and the Muslim world, religion has become a force that every government has been forced to take seriously.[6]

That is, fundamentalism has resulted in the revival of religions. But, the question remains whether it is the only way of reviving religion and religious ethics or whether it is the right way of reviving them.

Fundamentalism can be seen not only in religions, but also in politics, economics, ideologies, etc., and can take different forms. It is characterized by "extreme positions, rigidity and inability for dialogue."[7] Intolerance to religions and religious symbols in many countries is, for example, a kind of secular fundamentalism. However, we shall limit our discussion here to religious fundamentalism in general and in particular to fundamentalist tendencies in Christianity. Many Christian groups seem to think that fundamentalism is the only way of reviving Christianity and a life based on Christian ethical principles. We shall critically evaluate this concept in the light of the central message of Jesus, namely, the Kingdom of God.

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[4] John L. Allen, Jr., *The Future Church: How Ten Trends are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church*, New York: Doubleday, 2009, 260.

[5] For example, David R. Loy, "The Religion of the Market," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65 (1997), 275-290.

[6] Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*, New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 2000 (reprinted 2001), vii-viii.

2. Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism can be defined "as a religious or political movement or attitude with a strict adherence to a set of basic principles, based on a literal, not adapted interpretation, especially as a return to former principles. Separation, exclusion and extremism are characteristics of fundamentalism."[8] The resurgence and strengthening of religious fundamentalism in the recent decades can be seen as a reaction to the threats to the very existence of religion and religious ethics, mainly raised by the cultural shift of modernity.[9] The rage at the invasion of the structures and systems which the fundamentalists consider essential sometimes lead to a militant reaction and they consider it legitimate, because only through the use of force the structures and systems can be protected. This is also a survival strategy coming out of fear of annihilation by the opposing forces. The surest means of survival is thought to be a selective return to and a revival of certain doctrines and practices of the past, the authority of which are blindly accepted.[10]

Contrary to the popular use of the word, many do not share the view of limiting the meaning of the word 'fundamentalism' to extremism. In general, fundamentalism stands for a literal understanding of the scripture. It may welcome some aspects of the scientific and technological developments, but often argues for the restoration of a traditional ethics and lifestyle. Any change in life-style will be presented as the deterioration of values, without a critical evaluation of the particular context. The concept of sin and morality are rather limited to individual, sexual, familial and reproductive issues. The most typical characteristic of the fundamentalist ethics is that it considers every other value system as unethical, sinful and hence as inferior to its ethical perception. Thus, it develops an exclusivist and elitist approach that divides the society into two, namely those who belong to them and those who are against them. Intolerance to any other ethical perception, rigid application of norms without any regard for the particular context and judging any other ethical approach as immoral or unacceptable are inherent in the fundamentalist approach. They claim – implicitly or explicitly – an ethical superiority and consider themselves closer to God and all others away from God.

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[7] Peter Pavlovic, "Fundamentalism or Tolerance: What Is the Public Role of Religion in Modern Society?" in *Overcoming Fundamentalism*, 55-56.

[8] Christoph Stückelberger, "Introduction," in *Overcoming Fundamentalism*, 11.

[9] Richard Antoun, *Understanding Fundamentalism*, Oxford: Altamira Press, 2001, as cited in John D'Mello, "Fundamentalism," in *ACPI Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1, 555.

[10] See John D'Mello, "Fundamentalism," 555-556; Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, xv. Although the context of the new preface is the terrorist attack by the Islamic fundamentalists on Sept 11, 2001, Armstrong does not use the term fundamentalism to refer only to violent expressions of fundamentalism as in the case of terrorism.

3. The Christian Fundamentalism

Although the popular use of the word "fundamentalism" today denotes any kind of religious fundamentalism and particularly Islamic extremist movements, it evolved as a Christian movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mainly within American Protestantism among the conservative evangelical Christians. It was in fact a reaction to modernism and it affirmed a "fundamental" set of Christian beliefs. The word "fundamentalism" was coined by Curtis Lee Laws in 1920. At the Northern Baptist Convention (1920), he defined the fundamentalist as one who was ready to regain territory which had been lost to Antichrist and "to do battle royal for the fundamentals of the faith."[11]

Though Christian fundamentalism developed in the Protestant circles, soon it found adherents in other denominations. An increasing number of Christians, under the aegis of some movements or organisations, found the fundamentalist approach an effective way of guarding against the attacks from modernism and secularism. Although now and then there were organised and violent actions by some extreme fundamentalist groups (for example, attacks on abortion), generally Christian fundamentalist groups did not take resort to violence. Instead, they attempted to define Christian life on the basis of a fundamental set of doctrines and practices. Thus, Christian fundamentalists have been active in politics, and they are often called the "right wing".

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[11] Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, 174.

The Catholic Church was also influenced by the ideals of Christian fundamentalism. "Across the Western world, Catholicism has gone from being a culture-shaping majority to perceiving itself as an embattled cultural minority, and is responding as embattled minorities always do: With a 'politics of identity' based on reaffirming traditional beliefs and practices, sharpening the borders between itself and the surrounding culture."[12] In *The Future Church: How Ten Trends are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church*, John Allen, Jr. discusses the fundamentalist/conservative trends under the title "Evangelical Catholicism" and points out as indications of these trends the attempts to revive traditional liturgies, to affirm the Catholic identity of the universities, hospitals and charitable organizations run by the Church, scrutiny over the priests and nuns for alleged deviations, growing importance given to the teaching authority of the hierarchy, etc.[13] In the Catholic circles, the authority of the "hierarchical organization, the objectivity of the dogma and the control of (mostly female[14]) sexuality"[15] will be emphasized. Every attempt will be done to resist the disruptive changes brought about by modernity, to re-create stable institutions, to fight back and re-establish a social order congruent with the conservative mores of the religious vision. According to this view, the state must be subservient to God.[16] It is pointed out that many thriving organizations in the Church have fundamentalist elements in them and they stand for "full engagement in the 'cultural wars' relating to abortion and homosexuality, confrontation with the 'progressive' liberal values spread by the media"[17] and so on.

Although the Christian/Catholic fundamentalism today may have its own particular rationale and emphases, it is not something altogether new. At least since the attainment of the position as the state religion and especially with the acquisition of the political power as well, claims of superiority, attempts to conquer others even through the use of force, etc. can be noticed in Christianity. The crusades and later colonization, the protestant revolution, etc., further established these tendencies. Enlightenment, the loss of political power, modernism, secularization and post-modernism undermined the claims of superiority of Christianity and threaten even the very existence of Christianity. On the one hand, fundamentalist tendencies may be said to be a survival mechanism of Christianity. On the other hand, they raise the question whether they are the remnants of the continuing influence of the concept of the Church as a temporal power, the superiority of which is to be asserted and affirmed. In other words, we may doubt whether the underlying vision is that of identifying the Kingdom of God with the earthly kingdom. It is pointed out that Christian fundamentalism is one of the reasons for the lack of peace within Christianity today. "Though contemporary Christian fundamentalism may not use major physical violence, it promotes violence and discrimination between Christian denominations, sects, genders, societies, other faiths, ideologies and races."[18] Often an approach of antipathy is adopted towards other faiths and even Christian denominations. Some Christian fundamentalists continue to present other religions as works of the devil. Now and then we hear about violent reactions from other religions due to Christian preachers who speak about other religions in such a derogatory manner. Similarly, patriarchy is taken for granted as part of the fidelity to tradition. These tendencies are supported and promoted by the fundamentalist groups, as authenticity to the tradition and as means of guarding against liberalist attacks on their tradition. However, it is clear that such tendencies find increasing support and encouragement because they are considered to be helpful in reviving Christian life. This invites us to reflect on whether these fundamentalist tendencies are actually helpful in redeeming Christianity.

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[12] John L. Allen, Jr., *The Future Church*, 55.

[13] John L. Allen, Jr., *The Future Church*, 54-94.

[14] Courtney W. Howland describes how fundamentalism in different religions violates the rights of women. See her article, "The Challenge of Religious Fundamentalism to the Liberty and Equality Rights of Women: An Analysis under the United Nations Charter" in *Does Human Rights Need God?* Elizabeth M. Bucar and Barbara Barnett, eds., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005, 156-201.

[15] Guillermo Hansen, "Tolerance, Democracy and Fundamentalism(s): Challenges in Time of Systemic Bifurcation," in *Overcoming Fundamentalism*, 185.

[16] Guillermo Hansen, "Tolerance, Democracy and Fundamentalism(s)," 185-186.

[17] Guillermo Hansen, "Tolerance, Democracy and Fundamentalism(s)," 186-188.

One way of verifying whether the revival of the Christian life based on fundamentalist ideals is helpful or not is to keep in mind the vision of the Kingdom of God as revealed in the preaching and in the person of Jesus Christ. The central message of Jesus is the Kingdom of God. During the twentieth century theologians have tried to re-discover the real vision of the "Kingdom of God" and to understand the meaning of the Christian community and Christian ethics in the light of this vision. Daniel Harington points out that modern biblical research has restored the Kingdom of God as the horizon and goal of Christian ethics.[19] Hence, reviving Christian life means understanding the profound meaning of the Kingdom of God and shaping the Christian life accordingly. This also implies that in order to evaluate the current trends and to go forward in the right direction, we need to re-discover the values of the Kingdom of God. Real fidelity to the tradition means fidelity to the vision of the Kingdom.

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[18] James Daniel Chellappa, "Christianity and Violence: A Look at the Church as 'Oppressed' and as 'Oppressor'" in *Violence and Its Victims: A Challenge to Philosophizing in the Indian Context*, ed. Ivo Coelho, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2010, 260.

4. Kingdom of God: Jesus' Central Message

Jesus began his public ministry announcing the advent of the Kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). The word "kingdom" may give the impression that his mission is that of establishing a territory or state just like other states, where temporal power and authority matter. Only if we understand the meaning and implications of the "Kingdom of God" shall we really understand the mission announced and commenced by Jesus.

4.1. Kingdom of God and the Brotherhood/Sisterhood of All Humans

We do not see any precise definition of the Kingdom of God in the gospels. Rather, its meaning is presented in symbolic actions like miracles, healings, forgiving the sinners, table fellowship, exorcism, etc. Moreover, the "Kingdom" is described in the parables, similes and metaphors. The parables question the present reality and open up the possibility of seeing reality in a new and different way. They call for a transformation of the present state of affairs. For example, the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) speaks about the merciful Father and asks us to be merciful like Him; the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) rejects all kinds of discrimination, racism and prejudices and strongly establishes the fraternity and sorority of humanity by pointing out that everyone who is in need is one's neighbour; the parables of the Treasure and the Costly Pearl depict God's gracious gift that transforms life (Matthew 13:44-46).[20] The best biblical description of the Kingdom of God is given by St. Paul: "For the Kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). It is clear that for Paul, Kingdom of God is a state of life where righteousness, peace and joy prevail.

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[19] Daniel Harrington, "Kingdom of God" in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith A. Dwyer, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1994, 512.

[20] John Fuellenbach, *The Kingdom of God*, New York: Orbis Books, 1995, 72-77.

Kingdom of God is, primarily, the good news about God who loves us unconditionally. This love is revealed in Jesus Christ to lead all human beings and ultimately all of creation to participate in God's own life and love. Jesus demands his disciples to love as he loved (John 13:34). Jesus' love is characterised by an unconditional submission for the humanity and by the forgiveness he offered to the one who betrayed him, to the one who denied him and to those who persecuted him. His love includes everyone and is totally unconditional and compassionate. The three parables in Luke 15 reveal that God's only basis for dealing with us is compassionate love. Jesus' table fellowship with the outcastes (e.g., Matthew 9:10-13) reveals the compassionate God who desires to embrace all human beings in one great community of brothers and sisters. John Fuellenbach summarises the message of the actions and parables of Jesus as follows:

> The real content of Jesus' message of the Kingdom consists, therefore, in his image of God: God loves every human being with unconditional love. Jesus teaches us three important lessons: God always loves us, God always forgives us, and God is always present with us. Conversion to the Kingdom message of Jesus means, first of all, a conversion to the image of God that Jesus came to proclaim...[21]

If God is the Father of all, it means that all are children of God and hence brothers and sisters. All belong to the same family. No one is a stranger; no one is an outcaste; no one is inferior to me; everyone is a brother or sister of mine. Believing in a loving and compassionate God expresses the readiness to have this love and compassion in our relationship with others. "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36) is the motto of the Kingdom. In short, it can be said that the Kingdom of God is a call to be in relationship with God and with others, a relationship of love. A call to repentance and conversion is integral to the invitation to the Kingdom. This is the invitation to participate in the vision of God, to acknowledge God as Father and to accept everyone as a brother or sister. This conversion reorients our way of seeing, thinking, feeling, judging and acting. Conversion is a profound transformation of the whole person. Conversion is possible only because God loves us. The change in awareness, attitude, and conduct which we undergo through conversion is our response to accepting the offer of divine love.[22]

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[21] John Fuellenbach, *The Kingdom of God*, 177.

[22] Richard M. Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality*, New York: Paulist Press, 1989, 176.

4.2. Kingdom of God as Righteousness, Peace and Joy

The three basic values of the Kingdom given in Romans 14:17 are Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit. *Righteousness* in the biblical sense means Right Relations or Life-Giving Relationships. It has four dimensions, namely, relation to God, to neighbours both as individual and as part of society, and to creation as a whole. Justice demands to treat everyone with love and respect. Old Testament prophets often declared that even worship without justice is hollow and displeasing to God (Isaiah 1:11-17). Jesus' attack on all sorts of discrimination, namely, social, religious, moral, racial, sexual, etc. makes it clear that he stood, for a relationship of fraternity and sorority. For him God's Kingdom transcended all barriers and reached out to all by creating relationships that were life-giving and embraced each one with compassionate love.

God's Kingdom is present only where the relationship between humanity (and all things) is renewed in the pattern of the relationship that reigns in God. The Kingdom is ultimately relationship. It is the relationship which exists in God between Father and Son. The Kingdom is the extension of this relationship into creation.[23] Freedom, fellowship and justice are basic to the Kingdom and they are interrelated:

> When the revelation of God's love (the Kingdom) meets its appropriate response in man's trusting acceptance of this love (repentance), there begins a mighty movement of personal and societal liberation which sweeps through human history. The movement brings *freedom* in as much as it liberates each individual from the inadequacies and obsessions that shackle him. It fosters *fellowship*, because it empowers free individuals to exercise their concern for each other in genuine community. And it leads on to *justice*, because it impels every true community to adopt the just societal structures which alone makes freedom and fellowship possible.[24]

Jesus' special concern and preferential option for the poor is to be understood in this background. However, for him, the "poor" were not merely the economically poor. He extended his care and love especially to those who were socially marginalised, psychologically and emotionally broken and depressed and to the sinners. His compassionate love reached to them breaking borders, ignoring the social structures, surpassing many existing codes of morality construed by those in authority. That is, reaching out to the 'vulnerable' in the society was a special mark of the life and preaching of Jesus.

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[23] John Fuellenbach, *The Kingdom of God*, 162.

[24] George Soares-Prabhu, "The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a New Society" in *Theology of Liberation: An Indian Biblical Perspective*, George Soares-Prabhu, Pune: JDV, 2001, 238-239.

> During his earthly existence, Jesus did share spontaneously the lot and the joys of many excluded persons. Both Jesus' preaching of the kingdom and his personality expressed his Father's confidence in all men and women, how vulnerable they may be. An ethics based on the kingdom's values will challenge the faith that Christians place in the most fragile.[25]

The Kingdom is all-inclusive; it extends God's love to every woman, child and man, especially to the most vulnerable. So, any attempt to divide people, to consider others as away from God's love, will be diametrically opposed to the vision of the Kingdom. To accept the Kingdom or reject it will be the freedom of every person, but to consider people as sinners and less suitable for the Kingdom and to build up castles of the elected and the 'righteous' means to follow the self-righteousness of the Pharisees.

Jesus' commitment to justice and opposition to discrimination of any kind can be seen from his strong criticism against the Pharisees and Scribes who had practically divided the society into "saints and sinners" or those who were dear to God and those who were hated by him. We may be surprised at the sharpness in the words of Jesus, who was "meek and humble," when he criticises the Pharisees. Never did he compromise with their self-righteousness, claim of moral superiority and arrogance towards others. Denying charity, the basic law of the Kingdom, on grounds of external observances was, according to him, a mockery of the law. For him everyone was a precious child of God, the Father; no one was an "untouchable" for him, but was a brother or sister. Any kind of discrimination or division in the society even on religious grounds was, according to him, against the will of God. He fought against the unjust structures of discrimination in the name of religion, and sharply criticised those who tried to form an elite group, claiming moral superiority.

In the biblical sense, *Peace* is not merely the absence of war; it is rather a state of right relationship with God and fellow human beings resulting from reconciliation and harmony. Peace is the fruit of justice.

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[25] Vincent Leclercq, *Blessed Are the Vulnerable: Reaching out to Those with Aids*, New London: Twenty-third Publications, 2010, 64-65. Leclercq beautifully develops the vision of the Kingdom, the care and concern it demands to the vulnerable, and especially to the HIV/AIDS victims, who can be considered to be persons most vulnerable in our times.

Only the society which guarantees fraternity and sorority of all, is entitled to peace. Human history is replete with examples to show that any discrimination and any attempt to deny fraternal love and justice to others leads to the disruption of relationships between persons, nations, societies and cultures and thus to the destruction of peace.

Joy refers to the fullness of life and love. Kingdom of God is abundance of joy and love. That is, it demands to give every human being and every creature the opportunity to have the fullness of life, the beginning of which is the acknowledgement of each one's rights. Right relationships and peace naturally leads to the experience of joy.

4.3. The Centrality of Love

Kingdom ethics in nutshell is expressed in the Great Commandment of love of God and love of one's neighbour (Mark 12:28-34; Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 10:25-28). The Jewish scholars always tried to discern what the greatest commandment was and at the time of Jesus, probably they had the idea that the greatest commandment is love of God and love of neighbour. This is clear from the scribe's response to Jesus – he is not amazed as if he is hearing an entirely new teaching, but he is just acknowledging that what Jesus says is right. But the newness of Jesus' teaching lies in the new implications Jesus gives to this commandment. He revealed the essential interior bond between the two commandments and showed that the whole law can be reduced to this great commandment. He also interprets the love for the neighbour as the love for the nearest person in an absolutely universal sense. Love of God means fulfilling in faith and obedience all that God requires for entering into his Kingdom. It implies prayer, religious acts and forgiveness of one another. Authentic love of God is found in the loving concern for others. Lack of concern for others is a serious violation of the great commandment.[26] John 13-15 depicts the characteristic of the love which is commanded by Jesus. In John 13, in his washing of the feet of the disciples, Jesus teaches that love is mutual self-giving, which breaks down the traditional structures marked by superiority and inferiority. Love is built up on a relationship of equality. This is reaffirmed when Jesus calls the disciples his friends (John 15:12-17). Jesus demands to love as he loved, as he loved laying down his life for us (John 15:12-13). "To love as Jesus loved is to choose the other's life over our own if the choice comes to that. No one ever remains a "stranger" or an "enemy" for one who lives by the love which Jesus commanded."[27] This generous and unconditional love that surpasses all laws is the corner stone of the New Testament morality. It cannot be limited to a system or a few stipulations of the law, but goes beyond all systems, expressing itself in new ways and modes as self-giving out of generosity and dedication for the other.

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[26] David Bohr, *Catholic Moral Tradition*, Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1999, 50-51.

4.4. Love and Sharing

Love naturally leads to sharing. "Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:17). Similarly, love without sharing is dead (1 John 3:16-18). It is clear from the lifestyle of the primitive Christian community. When they believed in Jesus Christ and when they decided to accept the law of love of the Kingdom, they shared among themselves whatever they had (Acts 2:43-46, 4:32-35). In many of the parables, Kingdom of God is compared to a great banquet. In a banquet, everyone shares whatever is prepared. The norm of greatness in the Kingdom is not power and position. Service is the standard of greatness (Matthew 20:24-28; Mark 9:33-37). Jesus has taught it through his own action (John 13:1-17). Paul affirms this principle when he asks us to "count others better than" ourselves (Philippians 2:1-8). From the very beginning, the Christian community had a concern for the poor, the marginalised and the slaves. An emphasis on a strong community life rooted in love, sharing and justice was integral to its self-understanding. The Kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom, nor is it a purely spiritual or other-worldly reality which has nothing to do with the present life. Although the Kingdom of God is not about a political or social structure that is to be realised here, it has implications for social life – sharing one's wealth with the poor, forgiving one's enemies, etc. "Without providing the blueprint for the just society, it does contain the principles that serious Christians take as guides in contributing to the socio-political entities in which they participate."[28] In short, in its fullness, the Kingdom will not be realised here on earth, but through a commitment for a society where everyone lives in right relationship as a child of God and as a brother/sister to everyone else, we facilitate its coming in fullness.[29] "As the saving action of God, its (*kingdom*) outreach and extension is comprehensive and it integrates within it all the dimensions of human existence such as socio-economic, political, cultural, ecological as well as ethical and spiritual."[30] That is, the vision of the Kingdom had concrete social implications. In fact, people joined the Christian community because of these values of the Kingdom of God actualised in the Christian community. This is evident also from the fact that the Christian community did not have any political or temporal power for the first three centuries, instead it was a persecuted community.[31]

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[27] Richard M. Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 180.

[28] Daniel Harrington, "Kingdom of God," 512.

[29] In fact, the theological attempts to explain the tension between the "already" and "not yet" dimension of the Kingdom and the reality of the Kingdom as a gratuitous gift as well as something facilitated by the humans may not appear to succeed fully.

4.5. What Shall We Do to Actualise the Kingdom of God?

One of the dimensions of the Kingdom theology difficult to be interpreted is the "already" and "not yet" nature of the Kingdom and our role in the present to bring about the full actualization of the Kingdom. On the one hand, according to the New Testament, the Kingdom of God is first and foremost eschatological – "it pertains to the last day when God breaks into human history and brings about a new heaven and a new earth."[32] On the other hand, according to Christian faith, the Kingdom has been made present in Jesus Christ. Hence, "the terms 'inauguration' and 'anticipation' seem more appropriate than 'realization' for talking about the present dimension of the kingdom."[33] Then, naturally the question arises: Do we have any active role in bringing about the Kingdom, or are we just passive receptors? Harrington comments:

> The future Kingdom of God provides the horizon and goal for Christian action in the present. But it remains God's prerogative to bring it in its fullness. We do not bring it or build it up... In the present the teachings of Jesus and the biblical writers provide the values and actions that are appropriate responses to Jesus' death and resurrection as well as fitting preparations for God's kingdom in its fullness.[34]

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[30] George Keerankeri, "'Thy Kingdom Come!': The Kingdom of God as Gift and Responsibility," *Jeevadhara* 37 (1990) 135.

[31] Evidently, this does not mean that people joined the Christian community on account of social values alone. They acknowledged Jesus as the Saviour and committed their life for him. But, it is also pointed out that it is the Christian community that lived in fraternity, sharing and unconditional acceptance of all, including the marginalized that became pivotal to the conversion of many. Or, shall we say that people experienced the presence of Jesus the Saviour actualized in such a community that lived in love, sharing and unconditional acceptance of everyone?

[32] Daniel Harrington, "Kingdom of God," 512.

[33] Daniel Harrington, "Kingdom of God," 512.

[34] Daniel Harrington, "Kingdom of God," 512.

The Church and the Kingdom of God are not identical, yet not unrelated. The Church is the sign of the Kingdom. The Church can and should witness to the Kingdom and herald its coming, but cannot claim monopoly over the Kingdom or force its coming. As Harrington says, "In describing what Christians and/or the Church do with respect to God's kingdom, some modern theologians speak of "serving the kingdom" or "cooperating with the kingdom" or "spreading the kingdom." These are acceptable provided the biblical insistence on God's role is preserved and the temptation to Pelagianism is resisted."[35]

Hope in the fulfilment of the Kingdom and committed action for its coming are to be combined with trust in God's action and an active patience. Many Kingdom parables show that the Kingdom grows gradually and that we need to wait in patience. The Kingdom is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field, the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs (Matthew 13:31-32). It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened (Matthew 13:33). Evil may be present in the Kingdom till the 'harvest', but we need to be patient (Matthew 13:24-30). That is, we need to work for the Kingdom of God, a society that lives in love, justice, sharing, equality and fraternity, a society where the dignity, rights and freedom of every person is respected. However, such a perfect society will take place only in heaven; until then we need to work for the values of the Kingdom of God and do everything possible to promote such a society, but with tolerance and patience.

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[35] Daniel Harrington, "Kingdom of God," 513. Pelagianism, named after Pelagius (A.D. 354-420/440), is the (erroneous) doctrine that original sin did not taint the human nature and human ability to choose between good and evil. According to this, the humans have full control and responsibility and hence are sinners or virtuous by choice. Jesus' only achievement, according to this theory, was 'setting a good example' as against the 'bad example of Adam'. Augustine's refutation of Pelagianism led to the condemnation of Pelagius, and the Christian tradition, in general emphasised the weakness of the human will due to the original sin and the redemption brought about by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Though Pelagianism was rejected, its resurgence can be seen in the Christian history in different forms. For example, the controversy over 'work' or 'grace' during the Protestant revolution had some shades of the resurgence of the age-old theological debate. Attempts to give importance to human achievement over the gratuitous nature of God's gift or to achieve heaven through self-efforts and self-righteousness ignoring the graciousness of God can be called as Pelagian tendencies.

To ignore fraternity and harmonious relationships for the sake of observances will be detrimental to the basic message of the Kingdom, because communion of all human beings is the basic demand of the Kingdom:

> The Kingdom aims at transforming human relationships; it grows gradually as people slowly learn to love, forgive and serve one another. Jesus sums up the whole Law, focussing it on the commandment of love (Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 10:25-28)... The Kingdom's nature, therefore, is one of communion among all human beings – with one another and with God."[36]

In the same chapter (Romans 14) in which Paul delineates the values of the Kingdom he also asks not to judge others, to tolerate the differences in practices with respect and fellowship:

> Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God (Romans 14: 5-6).

Does it mean that anything and everything is acceptable? Doesn't it amount to a tolerance that borders with indiscriminate acceptance and indifference? That does not seem to be the attitude of Paul. He is more concerned about respecting everyone, extending the Kingdom to everyone, instead of judging others on the basis of external observances and, claiming moral superiority and building barriers that separate people for the sake of unnecessary and unimportant customs. Fraternity, fellowship and harmony should not be sacrificed.

It is noteworthy how Amaladoss underscores the importance of non-violent action for the realization of the Kingdom:

> Thinking of God's promise, some people prefer to focus on the Exodus than on the life of Jesus. They speak of God's intervention and the establishment of an earthly kingdom... Jesus, not only gives us a new vision of God's kingdom as community, but also outlines a way in which we have to struggle for it. This is the way of non-violence. Jesus was a revolutionary... But he did not fight for an earthly kingdom. Rather he was asking for a transformation of

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[36] John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 15. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html

> human relationships. He showed that this can be achieved, not by violent action, but by humble, self-giving love, that is ready to die rather than inflict death on others. A non-violent action does not destroy, but provokes people to think and to change. It calls for conversion; it promotes forgiveness and reconciliation. It builds community.[37]

Non-violence should not be limited to the avoidance of physical violence alone. Discrimination, intolerance, claim of moral superiority, unwillingness to extend fraternity to everyone, etc are forms of violence. However, tolerance should not become indifference. In the West, tolerance is often presented in opposition to fundamentalism, as an approach in which everything is possible and everything is of equal value. But, in fact it is a degenerated tolerance that equals to indifference. The end product is that the Western society is increasingly characterized by laxity, value relativism and opportunism. Tolerance becomes a creative value only when it goes hand-in-hand with respect.[38] Following the same line of thinking, Joseph I. Fernando argues for an ethic of recognition:

> An ethics of recognition means recognition of the other – persons, races, communities, cultures, nations, languages, traditions, ideologies and so on which are different from one's own… Racism, genocide, fascism, exploitation, discrimination and so on are the antithesis of an ethics of recognition. In its most fundamental form an ethics of recognition is the recognition of the human person who has his own intrinsic dignity, worth and value.[39]

That is, tolerance, respect for the other (who is unique and may be different) and recognition go together. Tolerance, as an active virtue demands the recognition of the worth of every person, even when he/she is different. According to the vision of the Kingdom, the worth of every person ultimately rests on the fact that he/she is a child of God, and hence one's own brother/sister. Any attempt of segregation and discrimination is the denial of the recognition that the other is a brother/sister and, therefore, is against the message of the Kingdom of God.

Here it may be pertinent to reflect on the deeper levels of meaning of the commandment, "Love your enemies" (which we have referred to above). Based on John Riches' work, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism,*[40] George Keerankeri points out that although the word 'enemies' may primarily refer to the Romans and Hellenizers, who were connected with the forces which negatively affected the Jews loyal to their traditions, it could also include groups within the Jewish community, excluded by the law-abiding Pharisees and Sadducees. God is a forgiving Father. He is not the one who is associated only with the righteous; He does not dissociate himself with the 'wicked' or take revenge on them. "The Kingdom of God consequently represents the working of this radical love of God in people by forgiving and transforming and reconciling them with one another and in this way building an inclusive community of love, forgiveness and brotherhood/sisterhood."[41] Considering others as enemies or excluding them from one's love on the basis of the differences or perceptions of virtuous life will be against God's all-inclusive love, which is the basic value of the Kingdom.

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[37] Michael Amaladoss, *Beyond Dialogue: Pilgrims to the Absolute*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2008, 122-123.

[38] See Peter Pavlovic, "Fundamentalism or Tolerance," 55-68.

[39] Joseph I. Fernando, "Religious Fundamentalism and an Ethics of Recognition," in *Overcoming Fundamentalism*, 83.

5. Conclusion

Modernism, post-modernism, secularization and many elements in globalization have raised serious challenges to the very existence of religions and religious ethics. This has lead to a division in the world between liberals and fundamentalists. Liberalism promoted and aided by the economic and market interests and political system is found as insurmountable by many who adhere to religious beliefs. Sometimes this helplessness and feeling of being threatened lead into violent reactions like terrorism and thus harm the peaceful existence of the human society. Even in other cases, this bifurcation has affected the peace, harmony, mutual trust and fellowship among religions, cultures and different social groups.

Similarly, this experience of being threatened has resulted in internal divisions in many religions, that is, between fundamentalist and liberal approaches. This can be noticed in Christianity as well; the Catholic Church is not an exception to this. Being threatened by secularisation, fundamentalist tendencies have become significant in the Church. Conservatism, traditionalism, overemphasis on hierarchical structures, control over the interpretation of the scripture and doctrines, strict observance of an ethical code, claim of ethical superiority, elitism and lack of openness to other religions are some of the signs of the strengthening of the fundamentalist tendencies in Christianity. To a great extent, fundamentalist tendencies in Christianity today are different from the period of conquest and forced conversions, because the main scope is not the conquest of new territories or new 'souls' but protecting those who are already members, reviving their faith and guarding them off the invasion of the forces that destroy the faith.

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[40] John Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980.

[41] George Keerankeri, "Jesus and Violence in His Kingdom Ministry," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 74 (2010), 818-819.

The Kingdom of God, the central message of Jesus, is not a territorial Kingdom, but consists in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood and sisterhood of all human beings. The whole humanity is conceived as a single family that lives in love, sharing, righteousness, peace, harmony and mutual respect. The Kingdom of God was inaugurated with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, but its full realization is yet to come. We need to re-discover again and again the real meaning of the Kingdom of God. There have been attempts to import the characteristics of an earthly kingdom to the vision of the Kingdom of God, but sooner or later the Christian community have discerned that such attempts have been detrimental to the realization of the Kingdom of God. Fundamentalist tendencies, though may be coming from an earnest desire to serve the Kingdom of God and facilitate its full realization and may give an impression of apparent success, are in fact diametrically opposed to the vision of the Kingdom. Ideological visions and practices based on exclusion, discrimination, elitism, claims of superiority, self-righteousness, controlling power of the law and overpowering structures will not in fact facilitate the real revival of Christian life or the realization of the Kingdom of God. Only an all-inclusive fraternity, love, justice, compassion, dialogue, openness to others and respect for others shall result in the real revival of Christian life and the realization of the Kingdom.

Perhaps, the Christian community has yet to reconcile with the idea that it is not a temporal power that has to assert its authority through conquests and the rule of law, but a community that believes in the fatherhood of God and the fraternity and sorority of all without boundaries. This appears to be true regarding the internal life of the Christian community as well as with regard to its relationship with the wider society.

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RELIGIOUS 'RELATIONALITY' AS AN ETHICAL RESOURCE

Maheshvari Naidu◆

1. Introduction

The paper probes the notion of 'relationality' as a possible ethical resource, having resonance in both Hindu religious thought, as well as in particular strands of feminist thinking. Drawing from an earlier ethnographic study[1] on Muslim women who follow the bodily practice of veiling,[2] this paper situates the observations emerging from that particular ethnographic context within a discussion of religious ethics and a framework of constructed religious alterity.

One notes that historically, particular artefacts of clothing and assembled appearances are recognized as being embedded in a matrix of religious and cultural situatedness. Likewise, the images of Muslim female bodies in items of clothing such as the veil, has in certain instances provoked intense reactions from non-Muslims. The study shows that there is a pronounced level of 'disconnect' between the perceptions of the Hindu women *looking at* the veil, and the experiences of the Muslim women *wearing* the veil, and suggests a possible resolution of this '*disconnect'*, through the notion of 'relationality' approached within the context of feminism and the Hindu notion of *darshan*.

Thus in the final instance, working through the heuristic tool of the 'gaze', the paper attempts to re-read 'gaze' within the spectacles of *darshan*. This re-reading explores an alternate way of 'gazing', which is seen to speak more profoundly to relationality and the transcendence of *difference*.

◆**Maheshvari Naidu** lectures in Anthropology in the school of Anthropology, Gender and Historical Studies at The University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa.

[1] Maheshvari Naidu, "Seeing (through) the Gaze: Marking Religious and Cultural Differences onto Muslim Female Bodies," *Journal for the Study of Religion* 22, 2 (2009), 23-42.

[2] Veil and veiling refers interchangeably to both the headscarf or *hijab* and the full gown, scarf and face covering, the *nikab* or *purdah*.

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2. Relationality and Veiling Relations?

Relativism and relationalism are informed by postmodernism and notions of relationalism are seen as being more allied to religion and religious thinking and behaviour.[3] Relationality can be distinguished as 'strong' and 'weak.' Strong or ontological relationality assumes a mutually constitutive, holistic relation. Identity is thus simultaneously individual, as a unique nexus of relations, and communal, because according to this perspective, all things have a shared being. Bauwens tells us that relational frameworks yield a "shared being," unique and mutually constituted nexus of historical, situational, interpersonal, and moral contexts. Relational frameworks imply that we are, most vitally, already in community of beings, and must live this ontological relationality and social space as a 'space of relations'. Atomistic individualism is rejected in favor of the view of a relational self, a balance between individual agency and collective communion.[4] This very Hindu perspective which speaks to the interconnected-ness of everything also puts the emphasis on *relationships* as being constitutive of social reality.

With respect to the artefact of the 'veil', Droogsma[5] quite rightly points out that people tend to "ascribe" meaning as opposed to describing the meaning the veil has for (Muslim) women. Images of 'veiling' among Muslim women appear to persistently exercise discursive power over popular perceptions of both Islam and the women who follow Islam. It is interesting to examine how bodily practices such as veiling, and women who practice veiling come to be discursively viewed by women of another religious tradition and what this says about their claim in being religious, ethical and modern women. Both the sample groups of women, Hindu and Muslim, perceive themselves as being religious, 'modern' and 'progressive'. The ethnographic material generated from interviews with Muslim women who choose the bodily practice of veiling and interviews with non-veiling Hindu women about their perceptions about the veil, and the women who choose to veil, is used here within the wider discussion of religious ethics and feminist ethics.

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[3] B. D. Slife, "Modern and Postmodern Value" in *Centers for the Family* (2002) at www.brentdslife.com//FamilyvaluesandRelationality.pdf

[4] Michel Bauwens, "Introduction on Individuality, Relationality, and Collectivity: Primacy of Relationality" (2006) at p2pfoundation.net/Introduction_on_Individuality,_Relationality,_and_Collectivity. Online accessed 25/10/2010.

[5] Rachel Anderson Droogsma, "Redefining Hijab: American Muslim Women's Standpoints on Veiling," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 35, 3 (2007), 294-319.

4. The Veil in South Africa

Hijab and *nikab* or *purdah,* are not public contested symbols in South Africa, where religion and religious practices are not perceived as politically menacing to nation state. The word secular was eschewed when drawing up the South African constitution, and reference to 'God' in the preamble was permitted, indeed welcomed. However, enshrined within the document is the individual's right to freely express her religion (whatever that may be in the case of non believing atheists) in both private and public spaces. While Christianity with an overwhelming representation of 73.52% is practiced in South Africa, all minority religions (Islam 1.45%) are afforded equal respect and freedom in the religiously plural South African constitution, and institutional structures. The diverse religious expressions of the equally diverse representative religious groupings and adherents are thus understood as being subsumed under the various constitutional religious freedoms. However, Since the 1990s the politics of covering or not covering the body has become hotly contested ground, in particular countries, where the state has in certain instances, intervened either to ban the veil or to impose it. A number of globally positioned studies have in turn analyzed the practice of veiling in terms of gender role attitudes and the politics of identity.[6]

South Africa has been, and is looked upon, fairly enviously by many other nations for its liberal and seemingly liberated constitution that spells out numerous freedoms for different minority and groups perceived as subalterns: the minority religions, previously marginalized groups of Black African and other non White women, the rights of children, as well as the interests of gay and lesbian individuals. Given the entrenched religious freedoms in the constitution and the visible absence of the local South African communities of Hindu and Muslim, Christian et al, in becoming embroiled in communal conflict stemming out of motherland spaces such as India and Sri Lanka, I was interested in probing the grassroots perceptions of religious difference as they come to be experienced in bodily practice and artefacts of religious and culturally encoded clothing.

The sample group for the ethnography comprised a purposively identified group of 40 Muslim women who practiced veiling, and a large group of purposively selected 120 non veiling Hindu women. Both sample communities were within the age spectrum of 20-60, although, the bulk of the material emerged from the larger numbers of women in the 20-45 age bracket.[7] Both groups of Hindu and Muslim women professed being "*religious*," and spoke of themselves as being "*ethically conscious*" and "*liberated*" women. All these self identification categories were fluidly understood according to the women's own normative frameworks.

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[6] Anne-Emmanuelle Berger, "The Newly Veiled Woman: Irigaray, Specularity, and the Islamic Veil," *Diacritics* 28, 1 (1998), 93-119; Jen'Nan Ghazal Read and John P. Bartkowski, "To Veil or Not to Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation among Muslim Women in Austin, Texas," *Gender and Society* 14, 3, (2000), 395-417.

5. The Ethics of Gazing on Other Religious Bodies

It is perhaps safe to say that the wearing of the *hijab* (headscarf) or *purdah*[8] (headscarf and gown with face covering) expresses the Muslim women's assumption of an Islamic identity that is immediately visual. Many Hindu women interviewed claimed that while they had "*no problem*" associating with, approaching and befriending, women who chose to wear the headscarf or *hijab*, almost all claimed that they found it extremely difficult to understand the face covering or the *purdah*, or why "*modern women in this country would choose to cover themselves from head to toe.*" Among the younger Hindu informants, there was a host of responses to the headscarf with some respondents claiming that it was "*the right of the women to cover their heads*," or "*follow their tradition.*" Some individuals claimed that the scarf looked "*cool*" and that they knew many young girls who teamed up a "*well coordinated look with scarf and pants*," while others felt that "*wearing the scarf was okay*," but leaned toward being "*somewhat old-fashioned and out dated.*" Aside from the reactions indicating an awareness of the *hijab* as a veiling practice and part of a religious tradition, most of the other responses 'saw' the headscarf in terms of the aesthetics of being 'good' fashion, or not.

The *purdah* or full face covering, as opposed to the headscarf, however, emerged, amongst both the young and older group of informants as being quickly subsumed within a familiar trope of oppressed womanhood, with many claiming that this practice was "*bit extreme*," "*ridiculous*" and that they "*could not understand*" why the women agreed to "*cover so much of their bodies*" and felt that the women "*must be terribly restricted wearing the full gown and full face cover.*" Almost all the respondents, including those women who pointed out that "*it was their* [the Muslim women] *culture to do so*," as well as several young Muslim females, believed that it was an "*oppressive*" artefact of dress that worked "*to oppress*" the women. One woman was especially vocal, and referred to the *purdah* as "*terribly stupid and oppressive*," even though she had said earlier that it was *their* culture. None of these respondents, some students, many in their second or third year of studies, or the more mature older respondents questioned that they were reading the *purdah,* in the words of Macdonald[9] as perhaps a "primary signifier" of the oppression and restriction of the Muslim female, or that there could well be other significations of the *purdah*, *for the women wearing them.* A few respondents did indicate that the *purdah* was not oppressive. However, most of the informants in this category stated that they themselves would never wear the face cover, and that they found it "*difficult to talk to women with face veils.*"

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[7] While Hindu and Christian Indian women were interviewed, for the purposes of this essay I have used only the interview responses with the Hindu women.

[8] It seemed that what was referred to in other parts of the Muslim world as *nikab*, gown and head and face cover was called *purdah* in the South African context.

One is reminded that the (constructiveness of) body becomes more discernable when it appears to 'deviate' from other bodies or, in the words of the feminist anthropologist, Margaret Lock,[10] "when it appears to deviate from the expectations of the dominant ideologies" that cohere around it. Some respondents felt that the veiled women wanted "*to be seen and known*" as being "*more than anything else*," as "Muslim." All these respondents showed a strong reaction to the Muslim women in *purdah*, seeing them as "*being too conservative*," with some in the older group of Hindu women feeling that they (the Muslim women) are projecting a *"too strong visual statement of religious identity*."

The Hindu women shared starkly worded narratives of "*how ridiculous*," "*you don't feel like talking to them*," "*they don't want to be approached*," "*they look alien*," "*I can't see their face, how crazy*," or "*I have never approached someone in full face cover*," "*I think it's difficult to approach them*," "*they don't mix easily with others*," etc. One response was, "*you are prevented from talking naturally,*" while another maintained that "you can't see their expressions and you don't know if they want to talk." While a few Hindu respondents claimed that as long as the women did not mind, "*it was okay*," an equal number spoke referencing themselves, with utterances, '***I** don't like the face cover*," "***I** don't like it*," "***I** don't feel like talking to them*!" and "*it scares me.*"

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[9] Macdonald, Myra, "Muslim Women and the Veil: Problems of image and voice in media representations" *Feminist Media Studies*, 6, 1, 2006, 7-23, 10.

[10] Margaret Lock, "Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 1993, 133-155, 139.

Even the women who voiced that they "*could not judge*" such practices and that it was a "*free country*" collapsed their narrative into their conclusion that seeing someone in full face cover meant that little contact or dialogue could be initiated, with one informant stating, "*yes they are putting up barriers between themselves and other cultures*."

Only a few of the 120 Hindu women interviewed, had ever approached a woman with her face veiled, in casual conversation in the manner that they would with other people. It is not so much that they *refused* to talk to the veiled women, just that they claimed that they did not feel comfortable approaching the women with face coverings. A Hindu woman added that although she "*respected them*" she would never think of approaching, and striking up a conversation with a veiled (face cover) woman for "*fear that I would not stop staring at her*." One woman declared that "*they looked scary in the mask*!" Only one young woman declared that she 'could and would approach women in *purdah*," because she "*could still see their eyes,*" saying that they were "*not erecting any cultural barriers because they would talk back*."

When asked if *purdah* should be practiced in the South African context, some claimed that it was "*an individual's right*," while others claimed that "*these women should not be different from everyone else*" and "*it makes them look unfriendly*." The same informant started, and then checked herself, but not before I was able to discern from her (and a number of other informants) that she felt sorry for the women, whom she perceived as *having to* completely cover the face. Such responses reveal a "surveying paternal gaze, similar to the historical colonizer,"[11] who is able to enforce his or her gaze on others.

Even as the non veiling women complained that they found it difficult to strike up a conversation with a woman in *purdah*, most women in *purdah* also shared that very few non Muslim women spontaneously approached them. While several answered that they were treated "*just fine by strangers,*" almost all of them, even those who claimed to be treated 'fine' later admitted that they routinely drew "*lingering stares*" and "*odd looks*" that said was almost always "*thrown on*" them.

Contrary to the perception of the Hindu women, conversations with the Muslim women over some months allowed a level of *emic* penetration into their lives and revealed that these women were very comfortable with assuming the bodily practice of veiling and certainly did not experience this as oppressive in any manner. Many Muslim respondents indicated that they "*did not know what the fuss was all about*" and said that they "*did not know what it was exactly the other women saw, or thought they saw when they looked at them*!" Many of the older Muslim women and some of the more assertive, younger women asked… "*These women that look at us like we are so strange*" … "*are they not religious themselves*?", and "*how is it they find* ***our*** *practice so odd*?"

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[11] Anne E. Kaplan, *Regarding Television: Critical Approaches – An Anthology*, Maryland, USA: University Publishers of America, 1983, 46.

A large percentage of the Hindu women interviewed, about 85% claimed to be religious. Many referred to the Hindu religion as a tolerant one that was not compelled to be proselytising. Many of the women were articulate and claimed that they were ethically conscious individuals. A large number, about 80% claimed that they had a strong Hindu (religious) identity and considered themselves religious. It was intriguing for me that their sense of being Hindu, ethical and religious still allowed them to 'see' and objectify the Muslim women as being 'oppressed.'

6. Feminist Ethics and Relationality

Feminist ethics is considered as emancipatory and as offering liberation from various systemic oppressions for women and other marginalized groups. More often than not the many expressions of systemic oppressions are ascribed to males, and patriarchal structures carved by males. However, I suggest that there are certain kinds of less discernable types of oppressions, subtle epistemic and ethical 'violence' that women also perpetrate against other women, who appear to 'deviate,' or be different from what is accepted as the norm(al).

The reflexively positioned Second Wave and later Third Wave feminisms can be seen as having rebelled against 'othered' categories such as women, and essentialised and othered groups of religions and religious communities of people. As a body of theory it sought to include the lived experiences of the subalterns as previously marginalised others.

Feminist movements thus had as their imperative, the redress of the political, religious and social asymmetries experienced by women. Within the literature, the wave model has been popularly used to describe both, the chronology, as well as the exigencies of the earlier movement from those of the latter. Feminist theory can be seen as having emerged from feminist movements, as the questioning and examination of the materiality of women's lives came to be mirrored in the scrutiny at the level of discourse. While earlier First and Second Wave feminist critiques were concerned with the under-representation of women and women's experiences within the social sciences (and increasingly even the natural sciences), later strains of more reflexive and situated feminisms were suitably self-conscious and cognizant of the homogenizing and hegemonic effect of the theories of Western origin. Feminist revisions of knowledge can be seen as having also a social imperative, where knowledge is not sought for its own sake but is positioned toward interconnected action and outcomes, and in essence an emancipatory role.

The emancipatory imperative within feminist ethics is in turn claimed as being offered with a 'communal' context; it is not meant to liberate just the one female, at the expense of the larger group. Carroll Robb[12] points out that feminist ethics teaches that individuals are not isolatable from their communities. According to the contours of feminist ethics, communities have an identity as a group that supersedes the identity of the individual, and personhood is read more contextually, or relationally, that is, in relation to one another. She claims that feminist researchers place on their agenda, the creation of knowledge that is emergent from people in relationship with one another. Another feminist writer, Jean Keller, concurs and adds that feminist ethics incorporates a relational model of moral agency, the insight that the moral agent is an "encumbered self," who is "always already embedded in relations with flesh-and-blood others and is partly constituted by these relations."[13] The point of 'relationality' is considered the critical access point of commonality in the dialogue between the two, Hindu ethics and feminist ethics.

Descriptive ethics refers to the general beliefs, values, attitudes that guide behaviour and determine what is customarily done. The difference between descriptive and normative ethics is "the difference between what is and what ought to be."[14] But both *what is* and *what ought to be* is meant to be understood in a relational context. Pointing out that feminist thinkers (epistemologically) view the person as essentially relational, not individualistic, does not equate to denying the existence of the self, but rather, as affirming that the self has relationships that cannot be separated from its existence.[15]

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[12] Carol S. Robb, "A Framework for Feminist Ethics," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 9, 1, (1981), 48-68.

[13] Jean Keller, "Relationality, and Feminist Ethics," *Hypatia* 12, 2 (1997), 152-164.

[14] Josie Fisher, "Social Responsibility and Ethics: Clarifying the Concepts," *Journal of Business Ethics* 52, 4 (2004), 391-400.

[15] Brian K. Burton and Craig P. Dunn, "Feminist Ethics as Moral Grounding for Stakeholder Theory," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 6, 2 (1996), 133-147, 135.

7. Ethical and Relational Way of 'Seeing'

While bodies may well be a vehicle for staging cultural et al identities,[16] the study shows that in this particular context, the bodies of Muslim women are inscribed and read within a repertoire of difference, and enforced through particular boundaries. Increasingly the body has been highlighted as a central site for the reproduction of various kinds of discourse, created by those gazing upon the body. More than biological materiality, the body is the 'site' where interactions of discourse and power enact themselves. In its various refracted understandings as social body, gendered body, symbolic body and religious body, it is conceived as a site of social grounding on which social and cultural processes are inscribed. The 'body' is conceived as "a set of boundaries"[17] that are, among other things, religiously and politically signified and maintained. This religious signification occurs within the gaze of the looker (or non veiling Hindu), feminist or otherwise, perceiving veiling acts as, at best obligating women's bodies, at worst, oppressing women and their bodies.

Colebrook[18] maintains that thinking about the body beyond sameness and difference allows us to see that the body is not a pre-representational ground, but an effect of representation, that instead passes itself off as grounding. The gaze(r) who looks upon this 'grounding' is synonymous to a masculine gaze because it accords to the looker a position of mastery. In this context, that which is gazed upon is the Muslim woman, and the gaze of the Hindu woman, designate her as the site and sight of difference.[19] Bodies are given, "a radical outside, limit, or surplus that cannot be exhausted by representational closure."[20] But she points out that this 'excess' has nothing to do with the ontology of the body itself, but rather with particular epistemic conditions that come to accrete to the body.

'Visibility' is spoken of as a mechanism of ocular metabolisation, and a "form of assimilation or introjection through the gaze,"[21] and

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[16] Pippa Brush, "Metaphors of Inscription: Discipline, Plasticity and the Rhetoric of Choice," *Feminist Review* 58 (1998), 22-43.

[17] J. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge, 1990.

[18] Claire Colebrook, "From Radical Representations to Corporeal Becomings: The Feminist Philosophy of Lloyd, Grosz, and Gatens," *Hypatia* 15, 2 (2000), 76-93.

[19] Corinn Columpar, "The Gaze as Theoretical Touchstone: The Intersection of Film Studies, Feminist Theory, and Postcolonial Theory," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 30, 1/2 (2002), 25-44, 44.

[20] Colebrook, "From Radical Representations to Corporeal Becomings," 80.

[21] Anne-Emmanuelle Berger, "The Newly Veiled Woman: Irigaray, Specularity, and the Islamic Veil," *Diacritics* 28, 1 (1998), 93-119, 95.

'visibility' precedes the process of internalization. Put differently, discursive practices are actually created, reproduced, and upheld through visible citation,[22] which in the context of this study is a reference to the visible context of the veiling women that are perceived by the Hindu women as establishing boundaries between themselves, their (covered) bodies and those of others. The women who practice veiling however, share narratives that clearly show the possession of alternative understandings, and do not 'see' themselves as being oppressed. This they clearly articulate in the interviews. The polyvalent meaning of the different forms of veil, *hijab* and *purdah*, revealed itself in the many different reasons shared by the women for veiling. Some referred back to what they saw as scriptural imperatives, while many younger Muslim women pointed to enjoying an emphatic visual expression of their religion and culture. The meanings attributed to the Muslim veil are thus not endemic to the veil itself but produced in and through cultural discourse by others. In other words the so called meaning of the veil is 'created' by the outsider looking upon the veil with her own subjective biases.

Theories of discourse call attention to the contested character of cultural forms and point out that cultural forms such as (institutional and doctrinal) 'religion' are to be grasped as implicitly constructed. Johnson reminds us that the *gaze* sees much more than what the naked eye does, it does not function as the eye, since the "gaze is pre-existent to the eye."[23] The notion of gaze within the intellectual traditions of postmodern social theory has been popularised by the work of Michel Foucault[24] in his work on 'the medical gaze' and Jacques Lacan[25] and his work on 'the mirror stage gaze.' Ann Kaplan's work focused on what she saw as the inherent male gaze, but further explains that the gaze is not necessarily male, but that to "own and activate the gaze," within the structures of language and the unconscious, points to its 'masculine' position.[26]

The responses from the Hindu women reveal that the 'visible' (veil) is not so much a *visible* object in as much as the(ir) *gaze* renders it visible. The paper refracts and understands the non wearer as a kind of paternalistic (neo)colonial gaze(r) likened to a masculine (if not a male) gaze insofar as it accords the bearer (the Hindu women) a position of mastery.

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[22] Neve Gordon, "On Visibility and Power: An Arendtian Corrective of Foucault," *Human Studies* 25, 2 (2002), 125-145, 132.

[23] R. Neill Johnson, "Shadowed by the Gaze: Evelyn Waugh's 'Vile Bodies' and 'The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold'," *The Modern Language Review* 91, 1 (1996), 9-19, 6.

[24] M. Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic*, London: Tavistock, 1976.

[25] J. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1977.

[26] Ann E. Kaplan, *Regarding Television: Critical Approaches – An Anthology*, 45.

The understanding is that the gaze 'sees' religious symbols such as the use of the *hijab* or *purdah* as marking differences onto bodies that ought to be neutral, unmarked and uncomplicated by religious difference, or as bodies that should look like any other dressed body.[27] The 'gaze' according to Foucault[28] is concerned with the gathering of information which works to inform and create discourse on the subject, and works to empower the status of the spectator. Crossley[29] points out that for Foucault, 'the visible' or the order of visibility, is what is 'seen', while the invisible is the practices involved in the making visible of, that which are not themselves visible. This making visible is overlaid with complex layers of projected meanings and interpretation and in this context a form of subjective exegetical, 'popular' reading of the *purdah* as being oppressive on female body.

8. Relationality and Taking *Darshan*

I would like to suggest a *possible* alternate way of 'seeing' in the Hindu religious concept of *darshan* as a particular kind of 'seeing.' Uttara Coorlawala is an academic and Indian dance exponent who presents us with an exciting methodological praxis. She has worked with the methodology developed within feminist film theory of deconstructing the gaze and uniquely applying it to read *abhinaya,* which she describes as the narrative component in Indian classical dance and the performer-audience (or seer and seen) relationship[30] or relationality.

Darshan implies 'sight' on a rich multiplicity of symbolic and spiritual levels, demonstrating "a complex mix of doctrinal, perceptual, visionary and experiential dimensions."[31] As presented by Coorlawala, *darshan* is where, in the *seeing,* the mind becomes engrossed in an experience of god's presence. However, Coorlawala sought to decontextualise *darshan* outside of its specific religious and god embededness (in this case Hindu) and proffered an alternative model to Kaplan's model of the (inevitable) male gaze, with a new way of seeing that sought to suffer *less objectification* and *more identification* with that which was gazed upon. The decontextualisation or said differently this *re*-contextualisation, is vital for our purposes, allowing us to recognise that *darshan*, very possibly holds the potential for transformative experience, *outside of religious experiences*. This transformative experience pivots on relationality and connectedness, and while meaningfully religious for the adherent, can also be understood within a feminist paradigm that equally places a stress on relationality and socially constitutive relations.

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[27] Sophie Body-Gendrot, "France Upside Down over a Headscarf?" *Sociology of Religion* 68, 3 (2007), 289-304.

[28] M. Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic*, London: Tavistock, 1976; M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Harmondsworth: Peregrine, 1979; M. Foucault, "The Eye of Power" in *Power/Knowledge*, C. Gordon, ed., Brighton: Harvester, 1980.

[29] Nick Crossley, "The Politics of the Gaze: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty," *Human Studies* 16 (1993), 399-419.

[30] Coorlawala, "Darshan and Abhinaya," 21.

[31] Coorlawala, "Darshan and Abhinaya," 122.

Coorlawala reminds us that perception models informed by the famous analyst Freud, and later Lacan recognise the power of seeing and its relationship to knowing and iterates that a *darshan* model has less hegemonic implications for the viewer.[32] *Darshan* as a seeing model appears to have less attachment to owning the *knowing* in any hegemonic sense. Coorlawala[33] is not blind to the difficulties involved in using material from one tradition in establishing a model in another. She states that examining "one way of looking through another way of looking may yield fascinating connections and insights,"[34] but is also limited as the two different perspectives have each their "value-laden socio-cultural orientations" which must also be factored in. What is proposed with a *darshan* model of seeing is a *consideration* of a particular way of perceiving, freed from any particularistic theological anchoring, that allows for a greater subject-object rapprochement, in this context between the Hindu women and the Muslim women and a moment of truer seeing between the two, thus paving the way for more ethical kinds of behaviour.

Coorlawala's use of *darshan* is intriguing, if perhaps in need of greater development, and it finds greater purchase when extrapolated to deconstruct the voyeuristic and paternalistic gaze on foreign religious (veiled) bodies, some of which was voiced by the Hindu women in the study who did not veil. One need not necessarily be Hindu or religious to be able to appreciate this alternate way of *seeing* and *being* in relationality.

A Foucauldian hermeneutic of gaze is concerned with creating discourse on the subject, and is seen as working to empower the status of the spectator. The *darshan* model, however, is conceptualised as being a "mutually complicit merging" of seer and seen. For the Foucauldian gaze,

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[32] Coorlawala, "Darshan and Abhinaya," 23.

[33] Coorlawala, "Darshan and Abhinaya," 35.

[34] Coorlawala, "Darshan and Abhinaya," 35.

'the visible' is what is 'seen', while the invisible is the practices involved in the making visible of, that which is not visible.[35] Accordingly invisibility and non-relationship empower the voyeur-spectator with the capacity to name or interpret, and thereby manipulate mentally, what is being projected on the screen, or in this case, the canvas of veiled female body, while the spectator, the Hindu female remains unmarked as gazer. The unveiled gaze in 'making visible' overlays that which is made visible (woman in *purdah*) with complex tiers of projected meanings and interpretation, and a constructed 'reading' of *purdah* on oppressed female body. Coorlawala points out that the 'looker' who aligns with the dominating male gaze which claims possession, or which criticizes and separates, is unlikely to experience 'transformation.'[36] This sort of masculine gaze forgets that on some level that we are relational agents, and that we are embedded in relationships of many kinds, with many kinds of (religious) so called others.

9. Conclusion

A *darshan* model of seeing is an example of a dynamic model that affords us, conceptually, the ethical resource for acknowledging and valuing a self that is both separate in its own religious and cultural individuality (non veiling Hindu women), while also connected to other individual religious and cultural selves (veiled Muslim women), differently dressed. *Darshan* comes from the Sanskrit root *drs*, meaning to 'see' and *darshan* could very possibly act as a "bridge"[37] connecting through non-cognitive methods of altering perception, the seeming separate religious and cultural selves, of Hindu and Muslim. A non-separating 'seeing', that does not fall prey to essentialist collapse between the two traditions, holds the possibility of contributing to an epistemological stance that is open to *not knowing* (about the religious other) or to *other ways* of knowing about women who practice *purdah*. In this way, dominant discourses that are created by outside gazers, that define the veil as oppressive, can be disrupted for the non Muslim lookers, creating the space for alternate frameworks of understanding about veiling practices that are meaningful for the veiling women themselves.

Identity negotiation, not least of which religious identity, is a process and everyday practice laden with ambiguity and power struggles as most believing and practicing individuals, perhaps more especially women will attest to. Standpoint feminist theories have emerged in the context of feminist critical theory attempting to explain the relationship between the production of knowledge and practices of power.[38] Therefore the plea for accepting alternate popular and scholarly discourses of the veil creates room for the looker to '*take darshan'* or 'see' that veiled Muslim women may well be able to validate *why* they veil, on grounds that are commonsense to them.

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[35] Nick Crossley, "The Politics of the Gaze: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty," *Human Studies* 16 (1993), 399-419, 401.

[36] Coorlawala, "Darshan and Abhinaya," 23-24.

[37] Lucy Du Pertuis, "How People Recognize Charisma: The Case of Darshan in Radhasoami and Divine Light Mission" *Sociological Analysis* 47, 2 (1986), 111-124, 121.

Ruth Smith[39] reminds us that we are but social beings who are morally called to relations of mutuality, that is, relations that are just and reciprocal, rather than relations of constructed alterity. Smith maintains that whatever else they are about, relations are always about morality and power and therefore about the positioning and repositioning of these relations.[40] This re-positioning speaks to transposing the masculine authoritative gaze into a non masculine gaze or feminist gaze of 'seeing' that asks the non veiling *looker* to surrender the need to 'own' any kind of hegemonic *knowing* (of the religiously marked female body) thereby opening the space for more ethical behaviour that can be rooted in *both* religious and feminist ethical imperatives. Writers within particular feministic frames of thinking have themselves proposed the concept of a mutual self. Those who advocate the mutual self from a feminist standpoint also insist on an ethic of care and understanding as being part of a connected concept of the self. The primacy of relationality comprehends the social world in such a way that it is not composed of separate entities, but constituted by the processes of relationship. In the context of South Africa, as indeed any other multicultural society, these processes of relationship exist within the common citizenship that we all possess, which is in turn enshrined in our constitutional imperatives. However, while constitutional imperatives are enacted on one level, it is at the very real level of human interpersonal interactions that ethical imperatives are enacted. It is believed that within a *darshan* model is held a kind of *hierophany*, a revelation at an interpersonal level of bringing to light, and into purer sight that which is gazed upon. It is suggested that construed thus, ***relationality*** is able to be experienced more intimately for the non Muslim (Hindu) female who gazes on the veiled body of the Muslim woman.

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[38] Sandra Harding, "Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a Site of Political, Philosophic, and Scientific Debate" in *The Feminist Standpoint Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, 1.

[39] Ruth L. Smith, "Relationality and the Ordering of Differences in Feminist Ethics," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 9, 1/2 (1993), 199-214, 202.

[40] Smith, "Relationality and the Ordering of Differences in Feminist Ethics," 204.

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IN DEFENCE OF THEORETICAL ETHICS
A Critique on Amartya Sen's *The Idea of Justice*

Saju Chackalackal◆

1. Introduction

Amartya Sen has made significant contributions to the understanding of the dynamics of poverty and its alleviation, global economics, and developmental paradigms. With the publication of *The Idea of Justice* (2009), the consequentialist agenda of Sen, an economist, has apparently become the most important word on justice. In tune with his rejection of 'transcendental theories of justice' offered by philosophers, Sen alleges that they are far removed from reality and are incapable of aiding the contemporary societies to overcome manifest injustice experienced. Hence, instead of following any idea of a perfect just society, Sen proposes that we must banish abstract theory and transcendentalism and should adopt a realizational model of justice to cure all ills of injustice. Sen's position, perfectly in tune with the postmodern philosophical agenda where there cannot be any universal or ultimate anchor for human pursuits (as all anchors are fundamentally relative), assumes the garb of *the* theory of justice, although he rejects any theorizing as of any ultimate value.

Sen has made very deeper explorations in understanding the intricacies related to the practice of justice. His work, *The Idea of Justice*, brings together a lot of recent studies from political philosophy, applied economics, developmental studies, etc., all of which are interspersed with references to the Enlightenment thought and writers. *The Idea of Justice* could be seen as an intense dialogue between deontology and consequentialism, where Sen makes his clear preference for the latter,[1] with an attempt to bridge the former without giving up any important ingredients of the latter.

◆**Dr. Saju Chackalackal** CMI, former Chief Editor of the Journal of Dharma, currently serves as the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore. Presently, he is also the director of Globethics.net India (www.globethics.net). His published works include *Ramayana and the Indian Ideal* (1992), *Euthanasia* (2000), and *Unity of Knowing and Acting in Kant* (2002).

[1] The consequentialist positionality that Sen adopts should not be confused with a utilitarian philosophy. In fact, Sen proposes different varieties of consequentialist positions, including utility-based, resource-based, and freedom-based capability approaches, among which he prefers and defends the latter. See Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2009, 231. According to Elizabeth Anderson, whom Sen

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The Idea of Justice is intent on reducing injustice in the world. It has a basic assumption that the presence of many theories of justice, most of them claiming to be ultimate or perfect theories, has not been successful in making our societies less unjust. The general experience is such that, as the society progresses and life becomes more complex, unjust practices are also on the increase. In this context, Sen's premise is that there is no use of having theories of perfect justice; what we need is the immediate task of minimizing injustice. As a consequentialist, Sen looks for an approach which would bring in immediate dividends. Hence, instead of the arduous task of looking for an alternative theory of justice, upon which further discussions, analysis, and judgment of justice could be anchored, Sen gives up abstract theorizing and transcendental institutions altogether, and opts for a comparative approach, coupled with the practice of open rationality in the form of democracy and comparative realizational approach with a hope that societies within which we live could be made less unjust.

2. Theoretical versus Practical Approach

Philosophical speculation has been one of the important attainments of humanity, unravelling the inner recesses of human thought and action, and leading us to a better understanding of reality (by addressing the ultimate questions). However, as going deeper into the reality is made possible by an employment of reason in its refined form, philosophical enterprise involves abstraction, which has led to a distance between the reality and philosophical knowledge. As ordinary people who have some understanding of philosophy have not appreciated this increasing wedge, there have been constant attempts to bring philosophical wisdom closer to reality and to make a bearing upon life. It was in this context applied philosophy was born, and ever since these two dynamic processes have been progressing hand-in-hand, although one or the other got priority at certain stages in the history of philosophy. By making use of the abstract philosophical knowledge, applied philosophers have tried to address concrete issues of life in such a way that better understanding as well as better resolutions of the problems have been reached.

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quotes in *The Idea of Justice* (263), the capability metric is "superior to a resource metric because it focuses on ends rather than on means, can better handle discrimination against the disabled, is properly sensitive to individual variations in functioning that have democratic import, and is well suited to guide the just delivery of public services, especially in health and education." Anderson, "Justifying the Capabilities Approach to Justice" in *Measuring Justice: Primary Goods and Capabilities*, eds. Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 81-100.

Amartya Sen, a trained expert in economics and developmental studies, admits that philosophy has been always his passion. Within the domain of philosophy, Sen is more interested in ethics, as it has got closer proximity with economics. In his writings, we come across with his critical acumen that enables him to go deeper into the economic realities in such a way that he finally comes up with thorough analyses and groundbreaking insights that are important for the welfare of the society. Sen's interest in philosophy is more practical than theoretical. According to him, theoretical discussion on justice would not yield any practical result:

> Despite its own intellectual interest, the question 'what is a just society? is not … a good starting-point for a useful theory of justice. To that has to be added the further conclusion that it may not be a plausible end-pointer either. A systematic theory of comparative justice does not need, nor does it necessarily yield, an answer to the question 'what is a just society?'[2]

Therefore, he makes use of the philosophical tools for the enhancement of human living specifically from the angle of economic relations and developmental studies. Ideally, Sen proposes that ethics and economics should gain from each others' expertise. In two of his important works, *On Ethics and Economics* (1987) and *The Idea of Justice* (2009), Sen makes very significant references on the importance of philosophy, especially towards the end of his reflection. He wrote in the last paragraph of his work, *On Ethics and Economics*: "… welfare economics can be substantially enriched by paying more attention to ethics, and that the study of ethics can also benefit from a closer contact with economics."[3] Interaction between ethics and economics must be capable of enhancing each other in such a way that economic relations and practices would be infused with value conception and ethics will be made more attuned to the practical needs of the society. Sen considers that the role of philosophy, especially ethics, is to ensure that its theoretical acumen must have a bearing upon the actual problems that human beings face in their existential contexts. Hence, towards the end of his detailed analysis of justice, in *The Idea of Justice*, Sen wrote: "… philosophy can also play a part in bringing more discipline and greater reach to reflections on values and priorities as well as on the denials, subjugations and humiliations from which human beings suffer across the world."[4]

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[2] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 105.

[3] Sen, *On Ethics and Economics*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990, 89.

[4] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 413.

The practical thrust of Sen in doing philosophy makes him question the intent to undertake an abstract or distanced theoretical scrutiny of justice. Indeed, Sen has a condescending attitude towards any attempt to arrive at a theoretical or rational understanding of justice that would give direction to the development of a just society. According to him, it would not serve any specific and positive purpose.[5] For, "the subject of justice is not merely about trying to achieve – or dreaming about achieving – some perfectly just society or social arrangements, but about preventing manifestly severe injustice..."[6] His overemphasis upon the concrete and the ensuing necessity of responding to the experience of manifestly severe injustice make him offer a general but disparaging evaluation of the rationalist understanding of justice as proposed by philosophers such as Rousseau and Kant. While this latter group of philosophers is said to have adopted "an arrangement-focused conception of justice," Sen favours "a realization-focused understanding." Indeed, the latter, according to him, concentrates "on the actual behaviour of people, rather than presuming compliance by all with ideal behaviour."[7] When it comes to an analysis and understanding of injustice, he warms himself to the importance of "clear articulation and reasoned scrutiny."[8] If he positively assents to reasoned scrutiny as instrumental in making us act against the injustices, it is necessary to raise the question as to how we would get along with such a scrutiny. What are the ingredients that would primarily enable us to conduct a reasoned scrutiny? If a reasoned scrutiny of injustice is possible at all and is capable of making us act against injustice, then, what is the foundation based on which Sen does not favour attempting to arrive at theoretical clarity on what is justice?

One of the reasons for Sen to shun an ideal understanding of justice is his own argument that those who act against injustice are not at all concerned about the establishment of a perfectly just society or perfect institutions to establish and maintain justice. He writes:

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[5] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 17.

[6] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 21. Sen does concede some value to reasoning: "Reasoning in some form cannot but be involved in moving from the observation of a tragedy to the diagnosis of injustice" (*The Idea of Justice*, 4). Further, he also makes positive assertion of reason's role in human life: "reasoning is a robust source of hope and confidence in a world darkened by murky deeds – past and present" (*The Idea of Justice*, 46).

[7] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 7.

[8] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 1.

> … when people agitated for the abolition of slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were not labouring under the illusion that the abolition of slavery would make the world perfectly just. It was their claim, rather, that a society with slavery was totally unjust... It was the diagnosis of an intolerable injustice in slavery that made abolition an overwhelming priority, and this did not require the search for a consensus on what a perfectly just society would look like. Those who think, reasonably enough, that the American Civil War, which led to the abolition of slavery, was a big strike for justice in America would have to be reconciled to the fact that not much can be said in the perspective of transcendental institutionalism (when the only contrast is that between the perfectly just and the rest) about the enhancement of justice through the abolition of slavery.[9]

It is true that those who acted against slavery and attempted to put an end to the injustices associated with slavery, caste system, apartheid, etc., had finally made their cause one of overwhelming priority. However, I once again insist that they could prioritize and act against injustice and go to the extent of even sacrificing their own lives for the realization of the identified priorities not only because they could make a neutral reasoned scrutiny of the injustices associated with the above said patent crimes, but also they possessed a conscience that was capable of sensitising themselves to those prevailing injustices; moreover, they were also convinced of the fact that it is only by pooling together all their energies that they could fight against the identified injustices so that the society could be made better or more just. Indeed, they were not stupid enough to consider that merely by one such an act, the entire society would overnight become perfectly just. They were, however, contributing their might in making this world a better place to live; step closer to the attainment of a perfectly just society.

A critical analysis of the contractarian approach of John Rawls, specifically his transcendental institutionalism (in line with Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, etc.) leads Sen to make room for an alternative view in the Smithian theory that focuses on the role of an "impartial spectator"[10] that offers us with various possibilities such as

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[9] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 21-22.

[10] Theoretically, this impartial-spectator emerges from "a thought experiment that asked what would a particular practice or procedure look like to a disinterested person – from far or near" (Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 404). The idea of impartial spectator, employed by Sen, is more or less completely taken from Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. So is the case with most of the ideas that Sen seems

> (1) dealing with comparative assessment and not merely identifying a transcendental solution; (2) taking note of social realizations and not only the demands of institutions and rules; (3) allowing incompleteness in social assessment, but still providing guidance in important problems of social justice, including the urgency of removing manifest cases of injustice; and (4) taking note of voices beyond the membership of the contractarian group, either to take note of their interests, or to avoid our being trapped in local parochialism.[11]

Although Sen approves of the positive role played by the impartial spectator in offering perspectives and reasons, or insights and discernment into an evaluation and, thus, to avoid parochialism of local perspectives,[12] it is not clear as to how one would attain the impartiality along the line that Smith has proposed. Moreover, how would we justify the possibility of an impartial spectator at all? The concept seems to be another version of the distanced universalizability that Kant had introduced through his categorical imperative and the resulting sense of duty for duty's sake. As Sen does not subscribe to any transcendental theory of justice and insists that only involved social choices would pave the way for any practical realization of justice, how is it possible for him to accommodate the impartial spectator in his understanding and realization of social justice?

3. *Niti* and *Nyaya*

The novel understanding of justice in terms of *niti* and *nyaya*, wrongly acclaimed by many of his reviewers (of *The Idea of Justice*) as the most

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to be innovatively introducing into his ethical discourse on justice. A close reading of *The Idea of Justice* indicates that it is through and through a contemporary re-articulation of the Smithian theories by interspersing it with a refutation of the positions of many other theorists who belong to the deontological category. Sen's preference for Adam Smith's position is obvious in the work. See, for example, Sen's interpretation and justification of Adam Smith's position on self-interest or self-love (in Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*), which is said to be a contentious ideal that he had put forth and popularised in giving birth to the modern capitalist market. Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 185 ff. Yet, there is at least one statement in passing in which Sen also comments that the society has to go beyond Smith: "… our understanding of right and wrong in society has to go beyond what Adam Smith called the dictates of 'self-love'." *The Idea of Justice*, 197.

[11] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 70; see also 106 ff. "Scrutiny from 'a distance' can be very useful in order to arrive at grounded but open-minded judgments…" Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 406.

[12] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 108-109.

original understanding of justice in Sen's writings, is taken from the Indian lore. His preference for *nyaya*, as the true sense of justice to be adopted, is neither referred to any definite sources in the literature related to Indian or Hindu philosophy, nor does he offer any thorough linguistic analysis and conceptual interpretation of these two terms to derive his preferred sense of *nyaya* as the sole terminology capable of conveying the true sense of justice in the contemporary society. Hence, the innovation that Sen seems to have attained in offering a *true* sense of justice, in *The Idea of Justice*, by making use of the technical distinction between *niti* and *nyaya* is not properly grounded and justified.

Nyaya is more argumentative than *niti* that follows a definitive and consequence independent reasoning;[13] as argumentative, according to Sen, the former takes up a comparative weighing of the positions and looks for better and more acceptable consequences or realizations in personal and social life than merely brooding over and worrying about any transcendental view of justice. Sen rejects the *niti*-oriented practice of justice as more institutional and authoritarian in character.[14]

Sen provides an example of Ferdinand I, the Holy Roman emperor of the sixteenth century, who famously claimed: "*Fiat justitia, et pereat mundus*" (Let justice be done, though the world perish!) to make distinction between the meaning and implication of *niti* and *nyaya*. According to him, Ferdinand was insisting on establishing *niti*, which would be done even if the whole world were to perish. Sen considers *nyaya* to be broader in its implications.[15] However, Sen's attempt is too simplistic in insisting on a watertight compartmentalisation in understanding *niti* and *nyaya*. Even if there is an insistence on *niti* (understood as "organizational propriety and behavioural correctness") in its severest form, it gets its validity not from the blind adherence, but from the foundation upon which every *niti* is based. For example, the Constitution of India (or of any other nation), according to Sen's distinction, would belong to *niti*. Although there is always the possibility of an amendment to most of the provisions (theoretically, including even the possibility of a complete redrafting of the Constitution of India, if that would be warranted by the change of Indian national consciousness), the content of these Constitutions would be ethically validated (not legally, as legal reference point will ultimately be restricted to the fundamental principles identified in the Constitutions and the promulgation made by the head of the Republic of India) not merely from the approval of the Parliament of India and the promulgation of the President of India. There must be valid ethical foundation/s for the same. From a political point of view, Sen would immediately raise the issue that how would we arrive at an agreement or consensus regarding the ethical positions, especially when we see a myriad of theories and positions advocated and adhered to by different individuals or groups of people within a democracy.[16]

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[13] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 210-214.

[14] See Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 326; here the discussion is on institutional understanding of democracy.

[15] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 21.

The treatment of justice as it is offered by Sen seems to be relying extensively on his political understanding of justice. For, he insists that whatever be the aspirations for and implications of justice that are acceptable to human beings – individually and collectively – ultimately those aspirations are restricted to the "elimination of some outrageously unjust arrangements to enhance global justice, as Adam Smith, or Condorcet or Mary Wollstonecraft did in their own time, and on which agreements can be generated through public discussion, despite a continuing divergence of views on other matters."[17] Sen writes elsewhere in *The Idea of Justice*:

> A no-nonsense transcendental theory can serve … as something like the grand revolutionary's 'one-shot handbook'. But that marvellously radical handbook would not be much invoked in the actual debates on justice in which we are ever engaged. Questions on how to reduce the manifold injustices that characterize the world tend to define the domain of application of the analysis of justice; the jump to transcendental perfection does not belong there. It is also worth noting here the general analytical point … that the diagnosis of injustice does not demand a unique identification of 'the just society', since a univocal diagnosis of the deficiency of a society with, say, large-scale hunger, or widespread illiteracy, or rampant medical neglect, can go with very different identifications of perfectly just social arrangements in other respects.[18]

Sen makes a leap from the transcendental theories of justice available from various philosophers to the issue of identifying a perfect theory of justice and makes the latter the most condemnable offence committed by philosophers. This allegation needs to be taken from a more general perspective. Whenever a theoretician proposes a new theory, say, for example, on justice, usually such a theory is proposed as an alternative to the existing theories, and such theoreticians would usually project this as *the* best alternative. Although they may independently imply that each of their theories provides us with the perfect understanding of justice, there is not yet any theoretical unanimity. That is, there are multiple views on what is justice, proposed by a variety of thinkers, none of them claiming to be the very best. Yet, it has not been the case that, therefore, we did not have any direction as how to realize justice. Having multiple theories on a single concept or reality does not deprive us of our right to have one position, even if it lacks transcendental perfection.

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[16] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 15: "… There may not indeed exist any identifiable perfectly just social arrangement on which impartial agreement would emerge."

[17] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 26.

[18] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 100.

Although Sen makes an outright denial of the validity and effectiveness of transcendental institutionalism,[19] as subscribed to by Hobbes, Rawls, etc., and alternatively suggests that the task ahead of us to establish justice is not the establishment of "a 'perfectly just' world society," "but merely … the elimination of some outrageously unjust arrangements to enhance global justice," a more fundamental question needs to be asked as to how would someone be moved along the line of action required for the elimination of manifest injustice without an understanding of justice. In order to concentrate on removing injustices that are *identifiable and that can be remedied* what tools do we have? In attempting to remedy injustice, there need to be idealistic and realistic perception of justice, although such perceptions may vary from locus to locus such as social, political, religious, etc.

Sen, like many postmodern philosophers, insists that there is no unanimity with regard to the theoretical understanding on justice, much less on the ideal of justice, and goes on to imply that there cannot be any spontaneous agreement on how we understand justice, or what it is all about. However, when it comes to his proposal of the elimination of manifest injustice as it is experienced in the world, he proposes that

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[19] According to them, the creation of just institutions is a necessity for the realization of justice; if global justice is to be realized, then we are in need of effective global institutions. Sen's criticism on transcendental institutionalism may be captured summarily in the following sentence: "Perfect global justice through an impeccably just set of institutions, even if such a thing could be identified, would certainly demand a sovereign global state, and in the absence of such a state, questions of global justice appear to the transcendentalists to be unaddressable." Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 25.

"agreements can be generated through public discussion, despite continuing divergence of views on other matters." If this latter is possible, why not we aim at the same agreement with regard to an ideal understanding of justice through public discussion? I understand that people would come to a consensus when it comes to the issues of manifest injustice or instances of outrageously unjust arrangements in the society. However, the contrary is also true in the sense that there were many instances in the history (some of which continue to this day and some new ones are added in the course of time) where despite the outcry of many about certain outrageously unjust arrangements, as they were experienced by many, not only no agreement was generated through public discussion to eliminate such unjust practices but, on the contrary, to perpetuate the same with more stringent measures. That is, the agreement was generated only to intensely perpetuate injustices to the detriment of the realization of justice. It implies that a mere practical and pragmatic political strategy of proposing that agreement could be reached through public discussion, especially upon those outrageous instances of injustice, is a hollow claim. Without a proper understanding of what is justice, I do not think that anybody would succeed in generating agreements through public discussion. Where would they anchor the public discussion? It is not possible to come to a consciousness that a particular experience is that of injustice without ever having an understanding of what is justice.

As Sen insists that perfect justice cannot be established by transcendental institutionalism,[20] his alternative is to reject all transcendental theories of justice and to look for a mechanism that would relatively reduce injustice in the world. Moreover, he shares contempt for any theoretical deliberation on justice, as he thinks that such processes would end up as hollow claims.[21] I do not subscribe to both the positions, nor to the one subscribed by Hobbes, John Rawls, and company. They seem to be finally settling down with immediate practical concerns, without sufficient rigorous ethical speculation and effective moral action. If their concern is only to look for practical dimensions of the world affairs – as most of the political or economic thinkers would do – then, they are doing applied philosophy and not theoretical philosophy *per se*.

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[20] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 27.

[21] Sen writes: "… an exercise of practical reason that involves an actual choice demands a framework for comparison of justice for choosing among the feasible alternatives and not an identification of a possibly *unavailable perfect situation* that could not be transcended." *The Idea of Justice*, 9, emphasis added.

Doing applied philosophy is not bad; indeed, we must positively acclaim the contributions made by applied philosophers. In fact, what I look forward is a collaborative effort on the part of theoretical philosophers and applied philosophers, as they would together contribute to the enhancement of human thought and would collaborate to explore the inner recesses of reality. As applied philosophy would bring more concrete facts into the speculation, the speculative philosophers, after getting a grip on the real and the concrete, would be in a position to make deeper and relevant abstractions upon the data supplied by the practitioners. They could be seen as two sides of the same coin. Then, we must look forward to mutual respect from either side, which would offer a better ambience for doing philosophy. However, the contemporary world is so much taken up by the immediate practical concerns so much so that many shun any abstraction and theorization, which constitutes the primary domain of philosophy proper. Sen's insistence that any theorization on what is justice would ultimately amount to an empty rhetoric or hollow claim belongs to such a position.[22] His immediate concern of addressing the economic and developmental issues of the globalized and globalizing world pins him down to the here and now, which, in turn, makes him increasingly blind to those realities that go far beyond the immediate and the practical, but access to which can be made only by an abstract rational scrutiny, which is an endowment of being human.

Being very practical, instead of "seeking the perfectly just" society, Sen proposes that "a realization-focused perspective" of justice would make room for "the prevention of manifest injustice in the world."[23] As an economist turned philosopher, who spontaneously falls back upon the applied dynamics of philosophy in the area of economics, development, and political thought, he favours an activist-style of philosophizing, which would be more bent on the prevention of injustice than on understanding the basic and positive dynamics of justice. The latter would instil in us better conceptual clarity, more from an ontological and epistemological angle, offering foundations for a proper ethical understanding of the social and political realities which are invoked in Sen's examples.

I endorse Sen's concern for positive involvement to drastically bring down the injustice prevailing in the world; however, I disagree with him in his insistence that this practical concern alone would provide us with a proper sense of justice. In fact, a proper fight against injustice can be had only if there are people who are convinced (which may also be understood in terms of a conceptual or theoretical understanding that is capable of moving people into committed action) of an ideal sense of justice. Indeed, those who are acutely aware of the prevailing injustice, if they also have a sense of the ideal justice, would certainly sacrifice even their own selves in order to overcome injustice and to establish justice. The fact that we do not find many such people, in our political democracies, is telling upon the utter lack of ideals amidst us, especially, among the democratically elected ruling 'classes' that covers the legislature, executive, and judiciary. The masses are deluded by the democratic machinery called the government, which ultimately turns out to be functioning more along the line of utilitarian consequentialist principles, which Sen himself does not endorse as a valid political ideal for the realization of justice.

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[22] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 26.

[23] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 21.

4. A Critique on Capability Approach and Social Realization

Sen proposes to assess social realizations (which ultimately becomes the crux of understanding and realizing what is justice) based on the capabilities (such as freedom) that people actually have. The centrality accorded to capabilities,[24] though would make room for individualized assessment of the realization of justice in any given context, jeopardizes any universal understanding. Indeed, Sen adopts the capability approach precisely in view of eliminating universalizable approaches to justice. In his view, transcendental and theoretical approaches cannot have any consensus on what is justice. His own rejection of a commonly acceptable conceptual understanding of justice makes room for a viable criterion, and he identifies it in the capability approach. Sen's preference for a consequentialist ethical strategy would fare better with the capability approach, as each one's capability – individually or collectively – could be checked in terms of the consequences that they yield in the existential life situations. However, this would erode the foundations of justice and any commonly acceptable criterion to judge the prevalence of justice in the society.

In the context of Sen's emphasis on the capability approach, a question to be asked is with regard to capability itself. According to him, "a capability is the power to do something."[25] If so, a human being is endowed with many capabilities, including, for example, the capability not only to know the structure of an atom and the possibilities of nuclear fission and fusion, but also to use the knowledge to destroy a part or the whole of living beings by the devastating effects of the dropping of an atom bomb. Although Sen is aware of the fact that capabilities or opportunities come with responsibility for what we do, what is the foundation upon which we could fall back, deliberate, and decide upon the valid realization of a capability? The very fact that capability is to be further scrutinized by a set of criteria itself indicates that the capabilities cannot be accorded any normativity. What could then be the ultimate norm based upon which these capabilities and their realizations can be judged?

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[24] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 19; see also chapters 11-13, especially pages 231 ff.

[25] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 19.

In Sen's understanding, insistence on the ultimate norm itself is problematic. In order to circumvent the transcendentalist ethical position that there must be an absolute and ultimate norm of justice and it is based on this norm that we would eventually judge whether something is just or unjust, in his interpretation of the freedom-based capability approach, Sen indicates the need for an *informational focus* in judging and comparing the overall individual advantages.[26] In fact, in proposing this informational focus, Sen also eliminates the need for any specific formula about how that information may be used. All these preoccupations do indicate that Sen's freedom-based capability approach as such cannot dismiss the anchoring of the final judgment on justice upon something other than the very capabilities. Introduction of the informational focus, to my mind, is the backdoor reintroduction of that conceptual understanding of perfect justice to which people always refer, which Sen has already done away with in his fight against deontology and transcendentalism. Sen's informational focus is made to be dynamic and accommodative of further understanding, as the very information base evolves through public reasoning. If this dynamism could be introduced into the conceptual ideal of justice, it would practically function in the same way and would yield similar results.[27]

Moreover, in the final chapter of *The Idea of Justice*, Sen finds "comfort to think that not only do proponents of different theories of justice share a common pursuit, they also make use of common human features that figure in the reasoning underlying their respective approaches."[28] As they are the "basic human abilities," commonly shared and employed by all human beings, why should Sen find it so objectionable all the attempts that look for a commonly acceptable theory of justice or a single source of justice which would function as the point of reference in eliminating injustice and realizing justice? Although it is not essential to link between the same basic abilities that human beings employ and the single source of justice, they are sequentially connected, as the same human beings are the agents or actors as well as the proponents or beneficiaries of a theory of justice that would evolve from the process.

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[26] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 232.

[27] Interestingly, Sen himself, at least in one place, admits that "the capability approach is a general approach." Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 232.

[28] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 415.

5. Why Rational Scrutiny Be Limited to Comparative Positions?

Although Sen's interest in abstract philosophy seems to be very limited, he dwells on epistemology, in passing, in order to serve the interest of defending his ethical position on justice. An absolutist position of knowledge or ethics is ruled out as an unproductive and nonviable transcendental abstraction. Alternatively, he places his own model of comparative realizational approach as evolving from the relative positions on justice adopted by different agents. According to Sen, being restricted by one position – even if it is an absolute position – restricts the advocate to a very limited horizon in such a way that furthering the understanding of justice would become partisan. There is, then, the necessity to open up to others' positions: "[W]e must pay serious attention to the perspectives and concerns of others, as they would have a role in the scrutiny to which our decisions and choices can be sensibly subjected."[29] So, in order to reject the absolutist position adopted by anyone on the theory of justice, Sen comes up with the proposal of a relational positionality, which, according to him, would be far more effective in bringing multiple views of reality to facilitate a more effective realization of justice.[30]

Sen comes to the conclusion that attempting to have an absolute positionality is practically limited and unproductive. He moves to such a conclusion with an analogical reasoning that pertains to the world of sense experience. In his view, the limitations that we experience in the domain of sense experience would also be part of "our thinking process and to the broadening of our capacity to contemplate. Our very understanding of the external world is so moored in our experiences and thinking that the possibility of going entirely beyond them may be rather limited." After ruling out absolute positionality, Sen proposes that it is reasonable to search for comparatives instead of objective transcendence. Hence, he maintains that "comparative broadening is part of the persistent interest in innovative epistemological, ethical and political work…"[31]

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[29] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 197.

[30] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 155-156.

[31] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 170.

Sen makes a clarion call for an "uncurbed critical scrutiny" as it is "essential for dismissal as well as for justification."[32] This is exactly what many ethicists, including Kant, had been insisting upon. Kantian emphasis on the critique of reason,[33] both theoretical and practical, was aiming at the dismissal of everything that was against the ethical principle that was enshrined in the categorical imperative, the anchoring principle in the Kantian ethics. Sen would not permit the acceptance of such a principle as it would immediately be classified as a transcendental approach that would lead to institutionalization. However, it must be noted that the general principle of ethics, the categorical imperative, that was attained in the Kantian rational enterprise, though proposed by Kant as an individual scholar, could withstand the impartial rational scrutiny and is capable of enshrining a society that is capable of being critical and open for the realization of humanity. Yet, in the course of history, just as Sen himself would do in the twenty-first century, we find that the Kantian enterprise was rejected as too rigid and authoritarian, although the universalizability principle of the categorical imperative, if understood in the proper perspective, would have been the bedrock for a just and sustainable human society.

The public reasoning or debate that Sen identifies as one of the methods of arriving at just social practices does not seem to be the solution. As is well evident from the modern communication scenario, where opinions are 'constructed' by those who are in power, including the media, an uninvolved or neutral public reasoning does not seem to be possible at all. However, Sen's theory proposes that even if we are involved with one or the other position, theoretically there is the possibility to overcome the same through public pressure. That itself is the problem. When public pressure also can be constructed, what would come to save justice? As long as Sen does not subscribe to any definitive position of justice, there is always the risk of going along with the public, even if it is constructed or manipulated. Instead of reducing or eliminating injustice, the public reasoning would end up as an ongoing clamour for being heard, and to establish that 'my path' or 'our path' is 'the best path'. So, in all likelihood, Sen's public reasoning, instead of being the sole source of true justice in practice, would turn out to be an instance of struggle for hegemony.

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[32] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 387.

[33] Immanuel Kant, demanding an impartial and uninvolved critical scrutiny, wrote in his *First Critique* about the nature of the Enlightenment Age and the necessity of an open critique of everything with the tool of reason, including itself: "... our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism [*Kritik*], and to criticism everything must submit. Religion through its sanctity, and the law-giving through its majesty, may seek to exempt themselves from it. But they awaken just suspicion, and cannot claim the sincere respect which reason accords only to that which has been able to sustain the test of free and open examination." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, first edition (1781), trans. Norman Kemp Smith (as *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*), London: Macmillan, 1929, Ai footnote.

The proposed "uncurbed critical scrutiny" that Sen insists upon tends to become applicable only in the case of all that is done by others, just as it is being practised in the modern democracy on the global level. For example, when it comes to the affairs of non-US regimes, the uncurbed critical scrutiny carried out by the US agencies becomes so thoroughgoing and crucial to identify the violations of human rights, while when it is an issue of the US regime's practices, the *uncurbed critical scrutiny* will be carried out only by the US and any external intervention would be ridiculed and rejected, as if they were all baseless or coming from another planet. On a more general note, we must also ask as to how many individuals or how many democratic governments would be ready to permit such uncurbed critical scrutiny of their affairs? As Sen subscribes to public scrutiny, and this scrutiny has to be left to the rationality of the public, without any definitive directive ensuing from any transcendental theory, it is quite likely that this scrutiny will end up as an ineffective tool. For, in the absence of a definitive norm, public rationality and critical scrutiny do not seem to be properly guided. A more dangerous aspect of this proposal is that those who are powerful and are capable of manipulating public opinion would succeed in *constructing* or *designing* 'critical scrutiny' that would serve their own vested interests, and it would be christened as justice!

Sen proposes that the impartial critical scrutiny should go beyond the limited boundaries of one nation or clan or organization. Public reasoning, according to him, should take into account "other people's *interests* for the sake of avoiding bias and being fair to others, and on the pertinence of other people's *perspectives* to broaden our own investigation of relevant principles, for the sake of avoiding under-scrutinized parochialism of values and presumptions in the local community."[34] Although this seems to be providing us with an ideal position (and Sen would resist it) for the realization of justice, from a practical point of view, even with the advanced access to the media communication, the readiness on the part of many individuals, authorities, institutions, etc., to listen to public reasoning, even within the best of democracies (if at all there is, or there would be one on the face of the earth!), is minimal.[35] Moreover, whenever someone claims to have listened to the public reasoning, it is mostly restricted to *one's own*; that is, very seldom do we find Sen's ideal of public reasoning being realistic at all.

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[34] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 402.

6. *Mahabharata* Model and the Consequentialist Argument

As a consequentialist, Sen claims to favour ethical decision making on the basis of "a comprehensive outcome."[36] It is evident from his repeated references to the war episode in the *Mahabharata*, the great Indian epic (specifically to the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, where the former insists upon the prioritization of duty in the life of the latter). The principled insistence on the part of Krishna is directly and indirectly questioned by Sen so much so that he seems to favourably juxtapose the position of Arjuna, who raised question after question with regard to the contextualities and casualties of a war. Sen qualifies the position of Arjuna as a "broader perspective,"[37] which, though vanquished by Krishna at the end of the whole dialogue, remains a powerful case for "faring well," than merely just faring forward. Indeed, the war scenario (especially Sen's repeated references to the fact that Arjuna was even asked to kill his own kith and kin) seems to give undue weight to Sen's interpretation along the line of a consequentialist position. However, if the same dialogue could be cast in another ambience of ordinary life situation, where ethical deliberations become an ongoing necessity, the principled position (or a sense of duty, but without unnecessarily highlighting the instruction to involve in a life-annihilating war) that Krishna recommended would be far more meaningful to attain clarity regarding the understanding of ethical principles and their practice.

In view of pushing through his argument for the realization-focused approach to understand justice, Sen poses a question against the validity of employing reason in attaining ethical objectivity: "why should we accept that reason has to be the ultimate arbitrator of ethical beliefs?"[38] He insists that, in matters of ethics, reason alone does not provide us with any guarantee, as we do find that many an approach to truth and moral practice could fail. It is true that reason as a human faculty when employed may fail; however, it does not mean, therefore, that it would fail always. Moreover, Sen seems to reject the value of reason by relying on examples of sheer chance events and claims that when we use and do not use reason, we do make mistakes. However, as a human faculty, if used with diligence, this faculty of reason is the most reliable of all other human faculties, especially when it comes to ethical deliberations. Although elsewhere I have argued that human being is an integral one and, therefore, human emotion should also be accorded its due place in any moral deliberation,[39] I do not mean that reason's powers could be replaced with any other endowment. Indeed, if Sen is looking for 100% guarantee, in the absence of which he does not accord any value to such an endowment, then no human achievement, not even sciences could be accorded any value. For, first of all, all these sciences rely on the power of human reasoning; moreover, all their results are fundamentally probabilistic (following the rules of statistics) and never absolute. If the line of reasoning that Sen initiates is to be maintained, we would necessarily end up as sceptics, as there is no door open to assure us about the value of reason, except the same reason itself.

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[35] The international response, especially that of the USA, on the "WikiLeaks" that has published secret documents of various nations and organizations and the attempts to deport and arrest WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange are telling upon the states of affairs of twenty-first century *democratic* practices.

[36] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 23.

[37] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 24.

Despite his reluctance to accord reason any absolute value,[40] Sen falls back upon the importance of "reasoned scrutiny" in order to circumvent the issue of ethical deliberation. According to him, "the case for reasoned scrutiny lies not in any sure-fire way of getting things exactly right..., but on being as objective as we reasonably can."[41] So, what he insists is "the need for objective reasoning in thinking about issues of justice and injustice,"[42] which would give rise to an impartial perspective on the part of the agent of deliberation and action. He subsequently maintains that "some people are easily *over*-convinced by their own reasoning, and ignore counter-arguments and other grounds that may yield the opposite conclusion."[43] This calls for caution on our part in employing reason; it must primarily be open to a continued and open scrutiny, never ever closing the possibility for further exploration and revision..

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[38] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 39.

[39] Saju Chackalackal, "Kant on Inclinations: 'Alien' or 'Human'?" *Journal of Dharma* 30, 1 (January-March 2005), 117-134.

[40] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 51. After dwelling on the importance of feelings and instinctive reactions as of significance along with reason, Sen writes: "What Akbar called the 'path of reason' does not exclude taking note of the value of instinctive reactions, nor ignore the informative role that our mental reactions often plan. And all this is quite consistent with not giving our unscrutinized instincts an unconditional final say."

[41] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 40.

[42] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 41.

As realization of justice is both a personal and social responsibility, the demands of justice do not arise from mere soliloquies. Certainly there is a community or a society that is involved and it has a very central place. Indeed, the individual ethical agent has to understand and accept the ideal of justice, but always in relation to the society. In this process, communication and dialogue (offering us the ambience for better understanding, clarification, and correction of some personal or societal misgivings) are said to be of vital importance.[44] However, this does not mean that, therefore, there is no chance of entertaining a basic position on justice. Proper understanding of justice cannot, therefore, be left to a public debate, indicating that what is finally identified as *just* is only that which survives public dialogue and scrutiny. For example, there are people who believe that all values and principles are to be democratically identified. It is true that the ethical ideals must be of application to all; however, it does not mean that only that which is democratically processed could be identified as valuable and ethically acceptable.

7. Principled Human Behaviour

An ideal understanding of justice would naturally demand a behaviour in consonance with the understanding of justice. Generally speaking, this responsibility is conceived as universally applicable; even if someone is ill-equipped to respond in full measure, it would insist upon the full measure binding nature, as such an ideal does not make room for any adjustment or exception. This general rule has been in place not to exact from those who are incapable of responding in full measure, but to retain the ideal in its fullness so much so that every participating member will try in the best possible manner to realize the ideal. However, Sen, as he does not subscribe to the ideal understanding of justice, opposes any universal demand on members of a society. As he puts it, "demanding more from behaviour today than could be expected to be fulfilled would not be a good way of advancing the cause of justice. This basic realization must play a part in the way we think about justice and injustice…"[45] Although Sen's approach seems to be really considerate, especially towards those whose behaviour will not match the ideal of justice due to lack of capabilities, to use his own terminology, it would finally let lose a total disregard for the ideal of justice that human societies have been subscribing to from time immemorial. It is true that no human society has been successful in realizing the ideal of justice; also there shall be no insistence that the position we have adopted with regard to justice is so sacrosanct that it cannot be changed at all. All the same, the high demands put on the members enable them to keep trying and, thus, to attain at least partial success. However, if we begin to subscribe to Sen's lenient attitude towards the members in general, it will give licence to all not only not to respond to the ideal of justice, but instead to claim that what is claimed by the ideal of justice is itself beyond their behaviour-ability.

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[43] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 48.

[44] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 88-89.

Sen rightly insists that when it comes to moral deliberations, the question is not only to concentrate on what actually happens but also to take into account the processes that are integrally part of the act and its effects. He writes: "It could hardly be adequate … to concentrate only on what actually happens, ignoring altogether the processes and efforts and conducts… A full characterization of realizations should have room to include the exact processes through which the eventual states of affairs emerge."[46] However, going one step further, I would insist that anyone concerned about justice shall care not only for the act and the processes involved, but also the view of reality (ontology)[47] and the way of life (ethical foundations) that give rise to the values that he or she would cherish and subscribe to in actual life situations. The emergence of the states of affairs as far as an individual moral agent or the collective behaviour of a group of people is concerned would depend very much on the foundational value conception that has been nurtured by the individual or the group.

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[45] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 81.

[46] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 22.

[47] It is very strange to see that a person of Sen's calibre very easily dismisses any discussion on ontological objectivity of the moral reasoning, as it is both difficult to understand and "largely unhelpful and misguided" (Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 41). I tend to think that it happens precisely because of his interest in the applied use of philosophy than his interest to go into the more philosophically abstract issues of doing philosophy, which, I believe, would enable any one to see the foundations of ethical concepts and judgments.

8. Pluralistic Viewpoint versus Single Source Theory on Justice

Sen is a pluralist: his theory of justice tries to bring together various theories with a hope that these positions would make us better understand the demands of justice and effectively realize them in various existential contexts. "Judgements about justice have to take on board the task of accommodating different kinds of reasons and evaluative concerns."[48] Hence, he proposes that, instead of eliminating or reducing various competing theories, there must be complementarity among various positions that clamour for prominence.[49] Moreover, a plurality of theories, according to Sen, would facilitate tackling the issues of justice from different perspectives, bringing together human ingenuity from different angles and, thus, to offer elimination of injustice and establishment of justice.[50] In tune with this pluralistic outlook, Sen expresses reservation against those who attempt to reduce all distinct values "ultimately to a single source of importance."[51]

He rejects any attempt to look for a unidimensional understanding of justice. He is taken up by the advantages (consequences) of having plurality of approaches; he is also aware of the restrictions that a unidimensional understanding of justice would lay on us. As long as consistency (emerging from rationality) is not a primary requirement in his theory of justice, Sen has no problem in admitting plurality of views, even if they would yield conflicting judgments and clamour for acceptance despite their variations and contradictions. If rational consistency, instead of realizational thrust, had been emphasized by Sen, then naturally his position would have looked for a single source theory (of course, an open and critical one at that), which, then would have been better placed to deal with divergent and even conflicting demands or positions on justice.

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[48] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 395. Sen's discussion of the three children and one flute, reference to which occurs repeatedly in *The Idea of Justice*, does pose the difficulty to come out with a single judgment. In fact, Sen himself approves the fact that there cannot be one judgment on the issue, as the judgment would differ depending upon the reasonableness of the arguments. Yet, he does agree, in the last chapter of the book, that although "plurality of reasons can sometimes pose no problem for a definitive decision," there may be instances where it "can pose a serious challenge." Although his position is such that the acceptance of a diversity of considerations does not necessarily entail an impasse, he at least concedes to the fact that "very hard decisional problems" could arise. Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 396-397, 399.

[49] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 309.

[50] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 413-414.

[51] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 395.

In an attempt to reject the single source theory of justice, Sen discusses a couple of judgments with regard to justice as derived by an individual. According to Sen, a person who "can reason his or her way into rejecting slavery or the subjugation of women does not indicate that the same person must be able to decide with certainty whether a 40 per cent top rate of income tax would be better than – or more just than – a top rate of 39 per cent."[52] If the proposed inability to judge about the top rate of income tax does not result from the technicalities involved in calculating the taxes and their role in attaining social justice, I would insist that the same person would be better placed if she were to subscribe to a single source theory of justice, which would come handy to deal consistently with the complexities involved in issues such as slavery, subjugation of women, tax laws, etc.

9. Conclusion

Economists, educationists, developmental scientists, etc., who do application of philosophical principles seem to assume the role of philosophers in the contemporary world of academics and research. Although I subscribe to the position that all human beings, by virtue of being human, are philosophers,[53] I am not ready to exchange mere application of philosophical principles in different fields for the rich theoretical philosophical heritage. There is a constant allegation that theoretical philosophy is too abstract and removed from real life. However, it is the critical distance that philosophy maintains with the actual life and reality that has made philosophy what it is.

The Idea of Justice gives an impression that it provides us with a novel approach and the best of the theories of justice. However, without seriously engaging with any of the classically recognized theories of justice (except for some passing but disparaging references on one or the other), he has come up with his new theory without any foundation, but claiming that having no foundation is the best way to realize justice. Moreover, it is clear from the foregoing discussion that he also does not subscribe to any definite position on what is justice.

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[52] Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 395-396.

[53] Saju Chackalackal, "Philosophizing in India Ought to Be Indigenous" in *Indigenous Philosophizing: Indian Horizons*, ed. Saju Chackalackal, 531-570, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2010.

Being a postmodern consequentialist, Sen has tactfully constructed his own version of realizational justice that would address the immediate instances of injustice without having any foundational position, but claiming that the viable position would evolve through the involvement of the public critical scrutiny. Although there are many who acclaim Sen's theory as groundbreaking and addressing the needs of the contemporary society, the question needs to be asked as to what extent Sen's realizational theory of justice has any impact upon the economic and social uplift of those who have been deprived of justice. For example, what does his theory do to the unemployed and deprived poor of the remote villages or the urban population, or to what extent does it help us remedy the injustices prevailing in the arena of global trade relations? Sen himself rejected classical theories of justice saying that they do not address the concrete realities of injustice; same is the case with his own theory. Moreover, his theory seems to be even promoting injustices that are related to the modern economic powers. Sen's sensitivity to injustice prevailing in the context of caste system or class struggles does not sensitise himself to their own root causes nor does he show any sensitivity to the injustices prevailing in the arena of economic globalization. Even if he wanted, I do not think that his theory could handle such issues, as his democratic critical scrutiny may even be sabotaged by the vested interests, be it fundamentalist religious or political powers, media mughals or multinational corporations.

In the context of an ever vibrant and developing thought, humanity has produced a myriad of theories in the domains of theoretical and applied philosophy. Plurality of theories indicates that humanity is capable of approaching life and reality from divergent perspectives, all of which would contribute towards the making of a more comprehensive understanding of reality. While positively acclaiming the plurality of theories or philosophical positions, it must be made clear that it does not amount to letting all theories have the same footing. My definitive positioning with one theory need not by itself invalidate all other theories; instead, the very presence of multiple theories indicates that my own perspective need not be the only possible one. My approach and understanding of reality need not exhaust the whole; yet, having my own position which must be further corrected and improvised does not warrant both extremes that either all theories are futile or that all theories are equally placed to compete with each other for prominence or hegemony. Letting all theories have their own place does not mean that they have the same validity. Moreover, a mere comparison of all these theories or taking the best from all these theories would not only amount to mere syncretism but also a dangerous move as it would finally turn out to be a incomplete and inconsistent cacophony, which may not merit any serious attention, let alone contribute anything to the elimination of injustice and the understanding or realization of justice.

In an attempt to identify a novel theory of justice which would be more effective than any other existing theories, Sen, a postmodern consequentialist, has bypassed almost all classical philosophical theories of justice. Instead, he has focused only on the scene of injustice and has attempted to propose a position based on the positions offered by some contemporary thinkers whose theories have been concerned about the practical dimensions of life such as economics and political philosophy. Although Sen is found to be critically approaching some of these theories (e.g., the theory of justice proposed by John Rawls), his critical engagement is limited to their practical concerns. In his attempt to identify a valid and effective theory of justice, Sen has failed to engage himself with important classical theories of justice. He claims that almost all these theories have failed as they primarily focused on the development of transcendental institutions which, in turn, have miserably failed to eliminate injustices prevailing in the society; moreover, some of these transcendental institutions have been instrumental in compounding injustice. Thus, according to him, all these indicate that the transcendental theories do not merit any serious attention.

However, his blanket criticism and rejection of all theories of justice and his inability to provide any new consistent and constructive theory of justice have ultimately left Sen without any foundation for ethics. He has rejected the footing of our understanding of justice in any normative tradition (his rejection of deontology runs all through his writings). As his innovative proposals for the establishment of justice do not and cannot have any foundation, but are said to function in relation to the situations of injustice and the public critical scrutiny in a *functioning* democracy, for both of which there is no focal or reference point, his proposals would not serve any purpose in guiding the members and institutions of the society towards the establishment of justice. Instead, I am afraid, if his idea of the establishment of justice in our society is accepted as *the idea of justice*, it may only escalate more injustice without any guarantee for a better theoretical understanding of justice or practical guide to fight unjust practices and institutions for the establishment of justice.

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PUBLIC HEALTH AND REDEEMING HUMAN DIGNITY

Indian Christian Ethical Reflections

Lucose Chamakala[◆]

1. Introduction

Health is concerned with the well-being of a person – not just the biological and psychological well-being but the integral well-being of a person in the society. It affects all aspects of one's personhood. Public health, with its curative and preventive dimensions, is the science and art of protecting and respecting life, preventing diseases, prolonging and promoting life and health through concerted and organized public or community effort. In the contemporary society, public health is commonly known as community health, as it is concerned with the health of all the members of the community and is to be protected and promoted by all segments of the society. Since Christianity upholds the unique value of every human person, endowed with rationality, freedom, responsibility, and a capacity to love and relate, the issue of public health should be a very important concern in the Christian ethics and spirituality. Similarly, a serious commitment to the establishment of public health should be a constitutive aspect of Christian faith and practice, as Christianity believes that all human beings belong to one human family.

2. Public Health: Reality and Challenges

Public health is concerned with people's health and every person's entire being: biological, mental, intellectual, spiritual and social. According to Breslow, dependence on medicine and medical technology as the source of health tends to obscure far more fundamental influences on health.[1] From the knowledge gained from many centuries of human life and experience, it is evident that living conditions and human responses to them largely determine the state of public health in a given society. Thus, public health

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[◆] **Dr. Lucose Chamakala CMI** is an Associate Professor of Moral Theology at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram Bangalore. He holds a Licentiate and Doctorate in Moral Theology from Alphosianum, Rome. His publications include besides many articles in the national and international journals, *The Sanctity of Life vs. The Quality of* Life, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2005.

[1] S. G. Post, *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, 3rd Edition, vol. 4, New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004, s.v. "Public Health: Determinants," by L. Breslow.

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includes the establishment of a healthy environment and responsible behaviour of the entire population. Human beings are, by nature, inclined to protect life, to promote it and to improve the health, not only of themselves as individuals but also of others, through individual and communal efforts in the societies in which they live. The collective social efforts to enhance and ensure health of all thus engage the efforts of the whole population. This includes the prevention of diseases and premature death through organized community-effort under the leadership of the concerned governments. However, in contemporary society, non-government and quasi-public institutions also play vital roles in establishing and promoting public health.

The concept of public health originated in England, mainly through the influence of Johanna Peter Frank (1745-1821), a health philosopher who conceived public health as good health laws enforced on the principle that the state is responsible for the health of its people.[2] Many consider that the Public Health Act of 1848 was a fulfilment of his dream concerning the responsibility of every state for the health of its own people. However, Sir John Simon (1816-1920), the first medical officer of health of London, was the one who built up a profound and successful system of public health through effective sanitary reforms, a system admired and appreciated by the rest of the world.[3] In this early 'disease control phase' of public health, the focus was on general cleanliness, garbage disposal, clean water, neat surroundings, healthy condition of houses, etc. Eventually, the United States of America, France, Spain, Australia, Germany, Italy, Belgium and the Scandinavian Countries, each developed its own unique system of public health.

While public health made rapid progress in the Western world, its progress has been slow in the developing countries such as India. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the 'concept of health promotion' of individuals emerged in the field of public health, which endeavoured to undertake personal health services, mother and child health care, health care of school children within the school setting, industrial health services, mental health and rehabilitation services, public health nursing, etc.[4] According to Park, the thirtieth World Health Assembly resolved in May

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[2] Park, *Preventive and Social Medicine*, Jabalpur: Banasidas Bhanot Publishers, 2000, 5.

[3] Park, *Preventive and Social Medicine*, 5.

[4] Post, *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, 3rd Edition, vol. 4, s.v. "Public Health: History," by J. Duffy.

1977 that the main social target of governments and the World Health Organization (WHO) should be the attainment of health for all citizens of the world by the year 2000. This 'health for all' was defined as the attainment of a level of health that would enable every individual to lead a socially and economically productive life.[5] This ideal of 'health for all' implied the attainment of the highest possible level of health for all people in all countries and the elimination of malnutrition, ignorance, disease, water contamination, environmental pollution, unhygienic housing, etc.

Studies and human experiences have revealed that, even in spite of all the advances in medical sciences and technologies, the standard of health services, the public expectation was not being provided in both developed and developing countries. The vast majority of the population in many developing countries, especially in rural areas, did not have ready access to the required health services. As Park observes:

> Although there was the recognition that health is a fundamental human right, there is a denial of this right to millions of people who are caught in the vicious circle of poverty and ill health. There are marked differences in health status between people in different countries as well as between different groups in the same country; the cost of health care is rising without much improvement in the quality... There has been a growing dissatisfaction with the existing health services and a clear demand for better health care.[6]

In many developing countries of the world, good health services favour only the urban people and the privileged few in the rural areas. Many millions of people do not have the basic requirements and determinants of good health to protect their life and to prevent and cure their diseases.[7] These determinants include an adequate and steady income, healthy nutrition, quality education, sanitation, safe drinking water and health care. At present, this is a serious and highly demanding challenge to the entire human family. As Park again points out:

> Only 10 to 20 per cent of the population in developing countries enjoy ready access to health services of any kind. Death claims 60-250 of every 1000 live births within the first year of life, and the life expectancy is 30 percent lower than in the developed countries... Large numbers of the world's people, perhaps more than half, have

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[5] Park, *Preventive and Social Medicine*, 633.

[6] Park, *Preventive and Social Medicine*, 9.

[7] Jones, *Bioethics: When Challenges of Life Become Too Difficult*, Adelaid: ATF Press, 2007, 226-227.

> no access to health care at all, and for many of the rest, the care they receive does not answer the problems they have...The health gap between rich and poor within countries and between countries should be narrowed and ultimately eliminated. It is conceded that the neglected 80 per cent of the world's population too have an equal claim to health care, to protection from the killer diseases of childhood, to primary health care for mothers and children, to treatment for those ills that humankind has long ago learnt to control, if not to cure.[8]

This seems a realistic view of the contemporary state of the development of public health. Moreover, widespread poverty, uncontrolled migration to urban areas and globalization affect the environment and public health adversely, including water and air pollution, global warming, uncontrolled management of injurious and harmful products and wastes.[9] The ideal, 'health for all,' remains a hard task yet to be realized. This can further be illustrated by briefly analysing the contemporary Indian scene, even though India is considered one of the fastest developing nations of the world.

3. Public Health: Indian Scenario

There has been remarkable progress in the health care field and in public health in India during the last few decades. This gradual and steady growth can be seen in the ever increasing number of health care professionals, health care facilities and specialisations, the increase in the number of hospitals including super-speciality hospitals, the availability of highly advanced medical technologies and treatments, etc. However, many millions of people do not have the basic minimum requirements and determinants of good health. These determinants include an adequate and steady income, healthy nutrition, quality education, sanitation, safe drinking water and health care. It is observed that while India has the largest number of medical colleges in the world and qualified medical professionals, majority of Indians do not have access even to basic health care, and about two-thirds of Indian population lack access to essential drugs.[10] As Ousepparampil observes,

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[8] Park, *Preventive and Social Medicine*, 8.

[9] L. Chamakala, "Bio-Medical Ethics in India: Challenges Ahead," *Asian Horizons*, 4, 1 (June 2010), 81.

[10] E. Pereira, "Health for Whom and by Whom?" *Integral Liberation* (April 2008), 16-17.

> India has got just 6 doctors for every 10,000 people, compared to the global average of 15 (for 10,000). There is a shortage of 600,000 doctors... The 2008 national budget shows a 15% increase in health care allocation. But still it is just 1% of India's GDP... Health care is an issue of social justice... and a collective responsibility... A comprehensive plan needs to be made after studying the ground realities to afford quality health care to all and free to the poor.[11]

Many people are victims of chronic diseases, including tuberculosis, malaria, cancer, HIV/AIDS, leprosy, mental illness, and a horde of other less obvious health problems.

Medical professionals are not accessible to majority of the people, especially to the rural and poor people because vast majority of these professionals prefer to work in urban areas, particularly in super-speciality hospitals, with high profit motives. Studies reveal that India has the highest number of tuberculosis patients in the world, and about 61 per cent of the world's recorded leprosy patients.[12] The treatment and the care given in many government and public hospitals are very poor, unhygienic and often dehumanizing. Many times the poor are ignored and side-tracked. This is evident from the following News Report under the title "New Born Dies of Red Ant Bites in Hospital:" "A three-day old infant died in the ICU of a government hospital here (Betul, Madhya Pradesh) after being allegedly bitten by a horde of red ants that even made a hole outside its left ear."[13] Recently, many vector-borne diseases like Dengue Fever, *Chikungunya*, Japanese Encephalitis, H1N1, etc., have killed many people in different parts of India.

The most important task before the Indian Church and Indian Moral Theologians in establishing public health is to ensure and enhance the realization of the right to health and to health care of all Indians, irrespective of religious, cultural, linguistic, economic and other diversities, and irrespective of their ability to pay. Some steps were taken by the Indian government in recent years to improve the health scenario. The *Jan Swasthya Abhiyan* is the Indian circle of the People's Health Movement, a worldwide network of people's organisations, civil society organisations, NGOs, social activists, health professionals, academics and researchers working to establish health and equitable development as top priorities through comprehensive primary health care and action on the social determinants of health. The National Secretariat facilitates communication between members through advocacy and campaigns, a website and discussion group, media releases, publications and participation in various conferences, policy dialogues and other events supported by *Jan Swasthya Abhiyan* volunteers all over the country. In order to make such a movement effective and successful, there should be a strong and sustained government commitment, favourable policy environment, well-targeted resources and a controlling mechanism for monitoring and disciplining the fast-growing private sector for the benefit of all by developing a suitable model of public-private partnership.[14] The main objective of the National Health Policy of 2002 was to achieve an acceptable standard of good health among the general population of India, and to focus on enhanced funding and organizational restructuring of the national public health initiatives in order to facilitate a more equitable access to health care.[15] The National Rural Health Mission, set up in 2005, is envisaged to focus on improving delivery mechanisms with the decentralization of health care at the village level mainly to bring down maternal and infant mortality.[16] Moreover, the Public Health Foundation of India was formed in 2006 to set up five World Class Institutes called Indian Institutes of Public Health in carefully chosen locations to provide professional training and to promote research in high impact areas of public health.[17]

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[11] Ousepparampil, "Nursing the Nation back to Health," *Health Action*, May 2008, 3.

[12] A. Vadakkumthala, "Health Care in the Face of Commercialization," in *Catholic Contributions to Bioethics*, B. Julian and H. Mynatty, eds., Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2007, 51.

[13] *The Hindu*, Tuesday, December 9, 2008, 11.

In spite of these well-intentioned plans and recent developments, real progress is not achieved in the health care field. According to Ousepparampil,

> The national level health situation remains more or less the same. Programmes like the national rural health mission, which vowed to make health services accessible and affordable, have not achieved much. When it comes to health care, there are two Indias: One that boasts of five-star hospitals with state of the art technology; the other where majority of people live with no access to quality health care.[18]

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[14] See J. Desrochers, "Health Care in India Today-II," 143.

[15] J. Desrochers, "Health Care in India Today-II," *Integral Liberation*, June 2008, 133-134.

[16] The June 2006 issue of *Health Action* brings out a good introduction to the National Rural Health Mission.

[17] Desrochers, "Health Care in India Today-II," 139.

[18] Ousepparampil, "Nursing the Nation back to Health," *Health Action*, May 2008, 3.

E. Pereira observes that the National Health Policy was in fact a dilution of public health sector and an uncontrolled promotion of private health sector, including medical tourism which has witnessed staggering health inequities, a resurgence of communicable diseases and an unregulated drug industry with drug prices shooting up.[19] A radical revision is essential in the present highly commercialized training of medical professionals. Medical ethics is not at all a serious topic in the medical education curriculum of many medical educational institutions in India. It is widely observed that many of the prescribed medicines and injections and other treatments, including even surgeries, are irrational or unnecessary. Ravi Narayan affirms that "if people's health needs are to take precedence over market factors, then ethical and social regulation of health professional education is unavoidable."[20]

4. Public Health and the Need of a Critical Response

It is a regrettable reality that the vast majority of the world's population does not have access to basic health care and are exposed to live in a vulnerable and sickly environment. Air pollution caused by automobile emissions of carbon monoxide, unburned hydrocarbons, lead and nitrogen oxides largely affect the health of skin, the eyes and the respiratory system and cause irreversible damage to the central nervous system. Similarly, acid rain (rain and dew with a mixture of sulphuric and nitric acids) caused by the emission of large quantities of sulphur and nitrogen oxides from industrial plants; the green house effect caused by ever-increasing amounts of carbon dioxide; the ozone layer depletion caused by nitrogen oxides released by high altitude aircrafts; nitrous oxide produced by bacteria and large scale use of nitrate fertilizers; and indoor air pollution caused by the use of traditional fuel for cooking, and tobacco smoke – all damage public health drastically. It is evident in all societies that the rich generally live longer and healthier than the poor. Poverty makes people unhealthy and disease makes people poor. Therefore, the issue of poverty should be seriously considered and incorporated into the treatment of public health ethics. As James Keenan observes, public health lacks a conceptual framework and a vocabulary to identify and analyze the essential societal factors that represent the environment and the conditions in which people can be healthy. He affirms that public health has a desperate need for a conceptual framework of social justice and human rights to analyze and effectively respond to the magnitude of different life issues.[21] As he argues, "We cannot make the claims of what is fair unless we have the linguistic instruments to understand why there are iniquities and how they can be levelled."[22]

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[19] Pereira, "Health for Whom and by Whom?" 20.

[20] R. Narayan, "Serious and Sustained Action on the Recommendations of the Task Force on Medical Education for NHRM should be Taken," *Health Action*, August 2007, 9.

Moreover, public health should be a serious concern of nations, communities and individuals. Millions of people lose their lives by AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases every year; millions are killed by abortions yearly; millions of infants die annually in the early years of their life; many become sick and die due to water pollution, air pollution and a generally unhealthy environment. It is really surprising why we do not respond powerfully and creatively, giving the highest priority to these human realities. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the people are ignorant, insensitive and indifferent to these core issues of public health. As Keenan argues:

> The number of lives lost to the tsunami approached 300,000. This tragedy generated billions of dollars of supported response within weeks. Although HIV/AIDS causes the same number of deaths every thirty-seven days, the will to commit concomitant resources to prevent such loss of life simply does not exist. Not only that, but if every thirty-seven days another tsunami were to occur, we would witness a global effort of the highest priority creating a wall protecting all of humanity against the threat of such tsunamis. Faced with the fact that the HIV/AIDS pandemic does sustain the loss of 300,000 persons every thirty-seven days, we find no such interest in building a wall against the 'sea' of the virus.[23]

It is high time to realize that to critically respond to the demands of public health is a moral obligation of every person, community and government. Everyone has a unique role to play to actualize public health. Public health should be conceived as 'health for all by all persons,' which is an integral aspect of social justice and a fundamental human right. The struggle for public health should be a struggle for social justice, basically to ensure the rights and privileges of every person in the society.[24]

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[21] J. Keenan, "Four of the Tasks for Theological Ethics in a Time of HIV/AIDS," *Concilium* (2007/3), 66-67.

[22] Keenan, "Four of the Tasks for Theological Ethics in a Time of HIV/AIDS," 67.

[23] Keenan, "Four of the Tasks for Theological Ethics in a Time of HIV/AIDS," 69.

[24] Post, *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, 3rd Edition, Vol. 4, s.v. "Public Health: Philosophy," by D. E. Beauchamp.

5. Public Health and the Sacredness of Human Life

In the Christian understanding, every human life is sacred from conception till natural death, primarily because of the unique relationship of human persons to God.[25] This relationship is expressed in creation that all human beings are created in the image of God. "God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). The dignity of human life has its basis in this fact that human beings are created in the image of God, and they are endowed with rationality and freedom. Therefore, every human life is an intrinsic good. To violate an intrinsic good is an act against the natural law. According to the natural law, the known good ought to be protected, respected and promoted, and the known evil ought to be avoided. Every human being without exception is ethically bound to follow the natural law. Thus, the dignity of every human life is a God-given dignity, which should be respected by all persons. Therefore, every human life is sacred and inviolable, and the unique value of every human life is beyond all human assessments and calculations.[26] As John Paul II argues,

> Man, the object of calculations when considered from the view point of quantity: one among billions... Our human statistics, our human cataloguing, our human systems, none of these is capable of assuring man that he can be born, live and act as a unique and unrepeatable being. But God assures him of all these! In God's eyes and before God man is always unique and unrepeatable. He is someone eternally thought of and eternally fore-chosen.[27]

The dignity of human life is further revealed in the Incarnation, God becoming human in the person of Jesus Christ. Everything was created by the Word of God, which was God himself, and the same Word of God became human in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. "O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy, who have made all things by your Word" (Wisdom 9:1). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). "The Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14). In this Incarnation, God reveals the special and unique value and dignity of every human life. Moreover, the Resurrection of Jesus guarantees and reveals that death is not the ultimate end of human existence, and every human life has a transcendental and an everlasting dimension. The sacredness of human life exists in God's eternal design. This is expressed by the psalmist when he states: "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed" (Psalm 139:14,16). This passage is rich with meaning, as the expression 'fearfully' signifies 'with utmost care and maximum perfection.' Therefore, in the Christian understanding, every human being, being created by God wonderfully and with the utmost care and maximum perfection, should be handled and respected by all with genuine concern and care.

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[25] L. Chamakala, *The Sanctity of Life vs. The Quality of* Life, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2005, 161.

[26] L. Chamakala, "John Paul II: The Promoter of Human Life," *Indian Journal of Family Studies* 4.1, April 2006, 53.

[27] John Paul II, "Christmas and the Truth about Man," *The Pope Speaks,* 24.2, 1979, 161.

The purpose of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ was to enable human beings to be fully human and to offer them fullness of life. As Jesus reveals, "I have come so that they (all human persons) may have life and life in its fullness" (John 10:10b). Since God loves and respects every person, every human life has a unique value and every person is morally bound to protect, respect, appreciate and promote one's own life and, as far as possible, the lives of others. This responsibility includes the protection and promotion of health, protection of everyone's dignity and integrity, and respect for everyone's freedom and other human rights.

Based on these theological and ethical reflections, it can be asserted that every person is morally and spiritually bound to engage in the establishment and realization of public health as far as he or she is able. Every person has a right and privilege to celebrate her or his life in the society. Celebration of life means the flowering and flourishing of life in all its dimensions, namely biological, psychological, intellectual, social, moral and spiritual dimensions. In this sense, public health is not simply the biological or psychological wellbeing but includes all these dimensions and the holistic and integral well-being of every person. Every person, every family, every group, every religion, every community, every nation has a very unique and irreplaceable role to establish public health amidst all. It should be a consistent collaborative endeavour.

We live in a pluralistic world. All of us together constitute one human society, one human family. The nobility and beauty of human life rest in our relationship to each other as members belonging to the same human family. Christianity believes that God as the creator is the Father of all human beings, and, as such, they are all brothers and sisters. It is truly Christian to accept, respect, appreciate and protect the well-being of all, irrespective of religious, cultural, geographic, ethnic, linguistic and all other differences. This is mainly because the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the healthy and the sick, the male and the female, from the East and the West, from the North and the South, all share the same human nature and the same dignity of life;[28] same origin and destiny. Considering this relational aspect of human life, the concept 'public health' should include the welfare of women, children, the elderly, the poor, etc., mutual respect and tolerance among various religions, mutual appreciation and respect among all nations, respect for the transcendental dimension of life, respect for everyone's dignity and personal integrity, respect for the dignity of human sexuality and the dignity of marriage and family life and welfare of the society, respect for social, cultural, religious, moral and spiritual values, etc.

6. Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, we may conclude that public health is every person's fundamental right and privilege. Both the Christian tradition and the Natural Law theory hold that every state is morally obliged to guarantee and safeguard the life and health of all its members without any discrimination. The protection of human dignity and life should be the task of the entire society. The real strength of a community can be assessed by its attitude and approach to the weak and the defenceless. In his Encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II has expressed the Catholic Church's profound commitment to the protection of and respect for every human life:

> Man [the human] is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his [her or his] earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God... Every individual is entrusted to the maternal care of the Church. Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church's very heart; it cannot but affect her faith in the Redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God...Today this proclamation is especially pressing because of the extraordinary increase and gravity of threats to life of individuals and peoples, especially where life is weak and defenceless. In addition to the ancient scourges of poverty, hunger, endemic diseases, violence and war, new threats are emerging on an alarmingly vast scale.[29]

The efforts of establishing public health should not only be concerned with preventing diseases and improving the environment, but it should also foster the integral and holistic well-being of all humans by protecting and respecting essential personal, familial, social, cultural, religious, moral and spiritual values. Therefore, public health should not be simply reduced to a bio-medical sphere alone. It should involve many disciplines including engineering, economics, politics, sociology, bio-medical sciences and religion.[30] As John Paul II again points out,

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[28] L. Chamakala, *The Sanctity of Life vs. The Quality of Life*, 5.

[29] John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995, 2-3.

> Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or wilful self-destruction; whatever violates the integrity of the human person; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere instruments of gain rather than as free and responsible persons; all these and others like them are infamies indeed. They poison human society... They are supreme dishonour to the Creator. Unfortunately, this disturbing state of affairs, far from decreasing, is expanding... Even certain sectors of the medical profession, which by its very calling is directed to the defence and care of human life, are increasingly willing to carry out these acts against the person. In this way the very nature of the medical profession is distorted and contradicted, and the dignity of those who practice is degraded.[31]

By being actively involved in realizing public health, human beings participate in the creative and redemptive work of God. In order to make this task effective, a committed public health movement should be organized. According to the Christian understanding, every person has a God-given right to be born with dignity, to live with dignity and to die with dignity, and whenever any person is denied of his or her basic human rights, God Himself is dishonoured. The responsibility of redeeming human dignity should be one of the primary tasks of every person, every family, every community, every nation, every international organization and the entire human family.

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[30] *The Hindu*, "Public Health Strategies for Suicide Prevention," Monday, December 15, 2008, 10.

[31] John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 3-4.

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COMMON GOOD
A Moral Category in the Social Thought of John Paul II

Richard Britto◆

1. Introduction

John Paul II, by his pontificate of twenty six years (1978-2005), has left behind an enormous legacy, with profound significance for the Church and for the world. He deserves much respect not just as a spiritual leader but as a moral and world leader as well. As a professional philosopher and a theologian, he raised the consciousness of all human beings of his age about the truth of human life and its destiny. As an ethicist, a universal pastor and a world leader, he was committed to the cause of the promotion of human rights and the common good. In an era of history dominated by totalitarian communism, individualistic capitalism, relativism and post-modernism, which posed a threat to human freedom, moral culture, religion and humanism, he constantly defended the dignity of human life.

The social thought of John Paul II "treats directly economic, political and cultural issues, actions and problems which militate the common good and welfare of people in society and which affect the dignity of human persons, families, communities and nations."[1] It includes three social encyclicals: *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), *Centisimus Annus* (1991) and two on moral issues: *Veritatis Splendor* (1993); and *Evangelium Vitae* (1995). These encyclicals reveal his unique methodology, his vision and strategy to build the future society and the world on a firm spiritual and ethical foundation for a new and just ordering of the society. John Paul II, while examining an issue, brings different perspectives and integrates insights drawn from philosophy, theology and other disciplines to make his point with stress on the importance of a philosophical ethics that looks to the truth of the good.[2] At the same time

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◆**Dr. Richard Britto** is a faculty member at St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary and Institute and serves the seminary as the administrator and the institute as a professor of Philosophy. He holds double Master's Degree in Philosophy, from the University of Bangalore and from St. Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore. He has also to his credit a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome, Italy.

[1] C. D. Skok, "*Encyclicals, Social*" in *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, M. Glazier, M. K. Hellwig, eds., Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994, 281.

[2] See A. Dulles, "The Metaphysical Realism of Pope John Paul II," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 48 (2008), 104.

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he makes it clear that his social thought is not "an ideology," nor "specific economic or political system" but rather "the accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence in society and in the international order, in the light of faith and of the Church's Traditions" (SRS 41).[3] Further he makes it clear that the social thought is neither a "third path" between Liberal Capitalism and Marxist Collectivism nor a possible alternative solution in contrast to them. But his social thought is a "set of principles for reflections, criteria for judging, and directives for action" (SRS 41-42), to analyze social realities, to make judgments to apply them in different historical, and cultural circumstances, (SRS 3, 8, 41) for the just resolution of the problems involved (CA 5).[4]

2. The Social Encyclicals and the Use of Philosophy

The social thought of John Paul II is philosophically rich as it contains and depends on the universally accepted values and principles arrived at with the right reason and natural insights. He confirms in his encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, that philosophy is one of the noblest of human tasks, testifying to our ability to wonder, speculate and construct systems of thought (FR 3).[5] And philosophy has an important role in the formation and development of the cultures. Thus the Church doctrines and the great masters of theology often adopt concepts and thought – forms, drawn from a particular philosophical tradition. As John Paul II points out, theology itself requires the support of philosophy that does not disavow the possibility of a knowledge that is objectively true (FR 82). Moreover, his social thought turns to philosophy, which looks to the truth of the good, to an ethics which is neither subjective nor utilitarian. Such an ethics implies and presupposes a philosophical anthropology and metaphysics of the good (FR 68, 98), to meet the challenge of reality and of human quest and questions.[6] Without doubt, John Paul II, in his social thought proves himself as a professional philosopher-ethicist, who felt things deeply and responded instantly to persons and situations through his concrete experience and philosophical knowledge in depth.

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[3] SRS=John Paul II, *Encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), AAS 80 (1988).

[4] CA=John Paul II, *Encyclical Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), AAS 83 (1991).

[5] FR=John Paul II, *Encyclical Fides et Ratio* (14 September 1998), AAS 91 (1999).

[6] Benedict XVI, *John Paul II: My Beloved Predecessor*, Milan: San Paolo, 2007, 10.

3. The Evolution of the Common Good in His Social Thought

The common good as the good of a community or a society is the good of the multitude, which is the good of all and each individual. It is shared and beneficial for all members of a given community or a society. The main concern of the common good is what constitutes the good life for human beings in their social life. The understanding of the common good in the social thought of John Paul II evolves from his understanding of relationship between the human person and a community or a society. He conceives human person as a subjective entity;[7] being bestowed with intellect and will, he is master of his own destiny (VS 39).[8] And human person is ordered to his ultimate end by his free and deliberate human acts (VS 72). Thus a human person fulfils himself by his morally good actions in concrete situations (VS 59). At the same time, human person is a social being by his nature and intrinsically ordained to interpersonal relationship with others (LE 3, 8).[9] Therefore a person realises himself in relation with others by seeking the good of others through interpersonal communion of participation and solidarity (LE 8). And it is out of love for one's good and of others persons come together in groups and communities (SRS 15, 28). This life in community of subjective beings creates goods for all to "find oneself" and makes a sincere gift "for others" (LE 14) by loving relationship among the members of a community, thus making every community a community of communion. Such communion among the members of a community enables each and every one to recognise others as brothers and sisters and to acknowledge the responsibility for the good of one and all through solidarity (SRS 8). Solidarity thus raises the level of interpersonal relationship from simple existence "with others" to existence "for others,"[10] and energises all to contribute for the well-being of all with the vision of equality of all in dignity and rights and commit oneself for the achievement of justice, peace and freedom of all. The goal is to construct a society based on the "civilization of love" (CA 10), expressed in reciprocal respect for the human dignity and human rights of each and all by acknowledging God in every person and every person in God in a community (SRS 40; CA 10, 47). And this ultimately leads each and all members of a community to a loving relationship with God and with one another, which constitutes the highest good of humanity (VS 9, 79).

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[7] John Paul II, *Address at Rome University for the Inauguration of the 10th Academic Year* (31 January 2002), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XXV (2002), 1:146.

[8] VS=John Paul II, *Encyclical Veritatis Splendor* (6 August 1993), AAS 85 (1993).

[9] LE=John Paul II, *Encyclical Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981), AAS 73 (1981).

[10] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations Organization* (5 October 1995), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XVIII (1995), 2:741.

4. Common Good and Interpersonal Human Relationships

John Paul II, in the social thought situates common good in the context of demands of understanding the human person and his dignity and presents it as the order of interpersonal and interdependent human relationships in a community or society; "a system determining relationships in the contemporary world, in its economic, cultural, political and religious elements, and accepted as a moral category" (SRS 38). According to him, the common good is a question of "individual's relationship with self, with neighbour, with even the remotest human communities, and with nature itself" (SRS 38). He calls it, "the full development of the whole individual and of all people" and explains the human development as progress of individual's relationship to self in terms of "conversion;" a sense of "change of behaviour" or "mentality" or "mode of existence" (SRS 38). This conversion entails a relationship to God and to one's neighbour, either as an individual or a community. He calls this conversion as the process of overcoming the moral obstacles with the positive moral values of growing awareness of interdependence among individuals and nations. Thus in the context of human relations of interdependence the common good becomes a moral category of determining the relationships in a society in all its economic, cultural, political and religious elements (SRS 38).

The common good as a moral category of determining the human relations signifies the expression of the very social nature of human person and thus the common good is "sociability" itself. John Paul II explains that the human persons are not isolated individuals; they require the co-operation of others in organising, planning and working towards a common goal. And collaboration with others makes possible for more extensive working communities (CA 32). There exists something which is due to man by reason of his dignity (CA 34), that is, building up a more decent life through being united and thus enhancing every individual's dignity and creativity (CA 29). This process, he calls as the authentic development whereby human person by virtue of his own reason and exercise of his own freedom exercises the right and duty to seek God and serve his neighbours (CA 29). Thus the common good as a moral category of interpersonal and social relations signifies that the common good consists in the ethical quality of interpersonal relations that is truly worthy of their dignity.[11] Therefore the realization of the common good depends on the very quality of the interpersonal relations and their preference of ethical values such as solidarity, friendship, love and so on.

John Paul II explains it further by saying, "The common good, by its very nature, both unites individual persons and ensures the true good of each" (LFGS 10).[12] Therefore the common good is not alien to the individuals but concerns greater good of the individuals and yet fully common. And the common good unites individuals in a relationship of communion, by which human life truly becomes a "sincere gift" to the other. John Paul II finds that in this "sincere gift of the self," human beings find their self-realization. He writes: "[Man] cannot find himself except through a sincere self-gift of self" (LFGS, 11). He asserts that love expressed as "the self-gift" and acceptance of another is the richness of a person" (EV 23).[13] And human persons become a gift to others only in the expression of love and love finds its fulfilment through the sincere gift of the self (LFGS 11). And at the social level it becomes "a moral and social attitude, a "virtue" which is solidarity" (SRS 38).

5. Common Good as Solidarity

John Paul II in his social encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* directly links the concept of "solidarity" to the concept of the common good, saying, solidarity is "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are responsible for all" (SRS 38). It signifies, the "readiness to lose oneself" for the sake of the other. He describes solidarity as a moral virtue determining relationships in the contemporary world in its economic, cultural, political and religious elements. As a moral virtue, it is not a mere "feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people. But on the contrary, "it is firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. That is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are responsible for all" (SRS 38). It is also a social virtue since it places itself in the sphere of social justice. He also clearly defines solidarity as an "ethical value,"[14] because it involves an affirmation of value about humanity and as a virtue directed par excellence to the common good, and is found in a "commitment to the good of one's neighbour with the readiness to serve him or her instead of oppressing him or her for one's own advantage" (SRS 38) but treating others as equals to oneself.

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[11] P. Calotti, *La progression intensive della categoria di bene comune*, in P. Carlotti, G. Gestori, et al., *Alla Ricerca del bene comune: Prospettive teoretiche e implicazioni pedagogiche per una nuova solidarità*, LAS, Roma 2008, 120-121.

[12] John Paul II, *Letter to the Families Gratissimam Sane* (2 February 1994), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XVIII (1991).

[13] EV=John Paul II, *Encyclical Evangelium Vitae* (25 March 1995), AAS 87 (1995).

Solidarity as the commitment towards one's neighbour as equals to oneself, translates individual interests into the willingness to give oneself for the good of one's neighbour, beyond any individual or particular interest. He writes, "Solidarity helps us to see "other" as our "neighbour," a "helper," to be made a sharer, a "part within ourselves," in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God" (SRS 39). In a sense, solidarity means that the powerful are called to serve and empower the poor, because valuing solidarity inevitably leads one "to embrace the option for the poor and commit oneself to justice and therefore to take up the cause of the poor in their struggle for justice."[15]

Solidarity is a virtue of communities as well as of individuals, because through the efforts to establish a common understanding and shared earthly goods, solidarity becomes the means for the development of all. If some are left out of development or even opt out of it, solidarity vanishes and true development cannot take place (SRS 17). Solidarity is not just a question of giving one's surplus to those in need but a change within oneself and in the structures:

> ... helping entire peoples presently excluded or marginalized to enter into the sphere of economic and human development. For this to happen, it is not enough to draw on the surplus goods which in fact our world abundantly produces; it requires above all a change of lifestyles, of models of production and consumption, and of the established structures of power which today govern societies (CA 58).

Therefore, solidarity is the obligation to work unceasingly to change hearts, helping all people to see every human being as a child of God, a brother or a sister, and a member of one's own human family (SRS 40).

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[14] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1987 World Day of Peace* (8 December 1986), AAS 79 (1987) 52.

[15] D. Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, Orbis, New York, 1992, 2.

"Solidarity is in fact a choice of life,"[16] and a true and effective "culture of giving" on the basis of a continuous "exchange of gifts,"[17] which makes every person and country ready to share the needs of others. According to him solidarity is an essential element of development on the personal, communal, national and international levels. Solidarity is a path to peace created by transforming mutual distrust into collaboration (SRS 39). The fruit of solidarity is peace and it broadens the narrow vision of peace as the mere absence of war. Solidarity in a particular way is the intrinsic social nature of the human person, which consists in the equality of all, in dignity and rights and the common path of individuals and peoples towards an ever more committed unity based on the awareness of the bond of interdependence between individuals and peoples, which is found in every level (LE 14-15). John Paul II argues that the principle of solidarity is an instrument for building up "the civilization of love" for which humanity yearns (SRS 40). Such a process towards "the civilization of love" has its beginning and fulfilment while solidarity is lived in family, in the community and in the world in an openness to the entire human family.[18]

According to John Paul II, the spirit of solidarity is a spirit that is open to dialogue. It finds its roots in truth and depends on truth to develop it.[19] This enables us to approach all cultures, all religions, all ideological concepts and all peoples. It makes it possible for individuals and groups to work together to strive to foster everlasting unity, charity and communion between individuals for further fellowship among all. Thus it seeks to build up rather than destroy, to unite rather than to divide. It replaces "ignorance and prejudice by tolerance and understanding, indifference and class struggle into brotherhood and committed service."[20] It creates bonds between people who recognize the other's value as a person and presumes the participation of all (CA 22). As a virtue it builds bridges of understanding and helps to realizes the inherent aspiration to help one's neighbours who are in need. Solidarity is capable of raising the level of relations between the nations from the "organizational" to a more "organic" level, from simple "existence with" others to "existence for" others,[21] in fruitful exchange of gifts, primarily for the good of the weaker nations and of grater good for everyone. This is precisely the act of proper to solidarity among nations (SRS 39), which ultimately results in the universal common good.

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[16] John Paul II, *Message for the World Food Day* (16 October 1997), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XX (1997), 2:575.

[17] John Paul II, *Address on the Fiftieth Anniversary of FAO* (23 October 1995), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XVIII (1995), 2:931.

[18] John Paul II, *Address to Catholic Relief Services* (8 October 1995), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XVIII (1995), 2:794.

[19] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1987 World Day of Peace*, 49.

[20] John Paul II, *Homily at the Mass in Indira Gandhi Stadium, New Delhi* (2 February 1986), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, IX (1986), 1:273.

6. Common Good and the Promotion of Human Rights and Dignity

The common good is not merely the sum of individual goods or interests nor welfare of the particular members of any society because the common good cannot to be identified with the particular goods and values of particular community.[22] It is indivisible and at the same time internal and external to the human person. The common good belongs to everyone and to each person: "the more "common" the good, the more properly one's own, it will also be mine-yours-ours" (LFGS 10). John Paul II distinctively defines the common good in the *Centissimus Annus* as:

> The common good is not simply the sum total of particular interest; rather it involves an assessment and integration of those interest on the basis of a balanced hierarchy of values; ultimately, it demands a correct understanding of the dignity and rights of the person (CA 47).

In this context, the common good is neither the sum of goods of each individual nor the greatest good of the greatest number. It is not the numbers or generality in the quantitative sense or purely materialistic good alone that would determine the common good but the existence of a hierarchy of values, in so far as some goods are more fundamental to the human person than others. And John Paul II argues that the progress of humanity must not only be measured by the progress of science and technology, but chiefly by "the primacy given to spiritual values and by the progress of moral life."[23] It implies that the dignity of human persons "requires the primordial moral requirement of loving and respecting the person as an end and never as a mere means" (VS 48).

The full attainment of the common good requires a complementary action that defends and promotes human rights. According to him, no authentic progress is possible without respect for natural and fundamental rights (CA 29). He holds that "promotion of human rights is the necessary condition and sure guarantee of the development of the whole individual and of all peoples" (SRS 44). For, the good of every individual person, every human community and of the political community itself is found on recognition of fundamental rights.[24] Therefore, the common good is served best when the dignity and the rights of the individual are protected in a community or society.

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[21] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly*, 155.

[22] M. Toso, *Il bene comue oggi*, in M. Toso & G. Quinzi, *I Cattolici e il bene comune: Quale formazione?* Roma: LAS, 2007, 21.

[23] John Paul II, *Address to the Thirty fourth General Assembly of the United Nations Organization* (2 October 1979), AAS 71 (1979), 1147.

John Paul II always defended human person, the human dignity and human rights. For him, it is self-evident that the human person is endowed with universal, inviolable and inalienable rights,[25] which directly and simultaneously flow from his very nature, for "human beings enjoy [them] by the very fact of their humanity."[26] They are universal and global by the fact that they are rooted in the nature of the person and they "reflect the objective and inviolable demands of a universal moral law."[27] John Paul II places, in the first place, "the right to life" among the inviolable rights, because human life is sacred.[28] The inviolability of right to life calls for respect for human dignity, because "the dignity of human person is a transcendent value,"[29] being created in the "image of God" and oriented towards Him. Thus the right to life constituted of a positive choice for life, which ensures the promotion of human dignity in every situation and circumstance.[30]

He accords the second place, among the inviolable human rights, to the "right to religious freedom" (RH 17)[31] of both individuals and communities and calls it as the "heart of human rights"[32] and the "foundation stone of the structure of human rights and the foundation of every truly free society."[33] Accordingly he states: "Religion expresses the deepest aspiration of the human person, shapes people's vision of the world and affects their relationship with others: basically it offers the answer to the question of the true meaning, both personal and communal."[34] "Religious freedom" indicates the freedom to seek the truth, especially the religious truth and to live it.[35] It also involves the freedom of conscience,[36] the right to manifest personal belief in private and public, the right to gather for worship and even the right to change the religion.[37]

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[24] John Paul II, *Address to Bengt O. Johansen, Ambassador of Norway to the Holy See* (18 December 1997), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XX (1997), 2:1049.

[25] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace* (8 December 1998), AAS 91 (1999), 378.

[26] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly*, 731.

[27] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly*, 732.

[28] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 380.

[29] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 378.

[30] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 380.

[31] RH=John Paul II, *Encyclical Redemptor Hominis* (4 March 1979), AAS 71 (1979); See also John Paul II, *Address to the Thirty fourth General*, 1157; *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly*, 2:737; and *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 381.

[32] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 381.

Apart from inviolable rights, John Paul II also acknowledges the traditional categories of the human rights as civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other.[38] And he considers that they are closely connected because they are the "expression of different dimensions of a single subject, the human person."[39] For they stem from the inherent dignity and worth of human person,[40] and "promotion of every category of human rights is the true guarantee of full respect for each individual right."[41] Accordingly, he lists those universally recognised human rights such as:

> The right to life, liberty and security of person, the right to food, clothing, housing, sufficient health care, rest and leisure, the right to freedom of expression, education and culture, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the right to manifest one's religion either individually or in community, in public or in private, the right to chose a state of life, to found a family and to enjoy all conditions of necessary for family life, the right to property and work, to adequate working conditions and a just wage, the right of assembly and association, the right to political participation and the right to participate in free choice of political system of the people to which one belongs.[42]

They are also the rights of individuals and communities of peoples, for, they "tell us something important about the actual life of every individual and of every social group,"[43] both spiritual and material realities. Thus the common good consists in recognition and respect for these rights because they are common to all and they concern the necessary conditions for the satisfaction of basic needs and self-fulfilment and the full dimension of human life.[44] In short, John Paul II emphasizes that individual persons have the right to those conditions and things to realize their dignity as human beings. Thus he insists on both the dignity of the human person and the essential social nature of the human dignity being recognized and respected. He makes it clear that the common good of the whole society dwells in man, in his dignity and rights; for "man is a common good: a common good of the family and of humanity, of individual groups and of different communities (LFGS 11). Recognition, respect and promotion of human dignity and rights promote the good of the individual and thus serve the common good. The good of each individual and of all is contained in promotion of the dignity and rights of each and of all. For, human rights are of highest importance in social life, both at the national and international levels – "all human beings in every nation and country should enjoy effectively their full rights under any political regime or system."[45]

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[33] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly*, 737.

[34] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 381.

[35] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly*, 739.

[36] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly*, 737.

[37] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 380.

[38] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 379.

[39] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 379.

[40] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 379.

[41] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 379.

[42] John Paul II, *Address to the Thirty fourth General Assembly*, 1152-1153.

7. Common Good and Respect for Human Dignity and Rights

The aim of John Paul II's definition of the common good is the "defence of the human person and the safeguarding of human rights and human dignity" (CA 47) because the human person and his preferences ought to be "the origin, the subject and the purpose of all social institutions" (GS 25).[46] The dignity of the human person springs from his nature being created by God "for Himself." The respect for the dignity of every human person and respect for inviolable and inalienable human rights are fundamental for any society (EV 59, 69). John Paul II resists the contemporary temptation to relegate the transcendental human dignity to the private sphere by sidelining the spiritual and the transcendent human dignity from public life, by defining the human person in merely biological or sociological terms.[47]

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[43] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General*, 732.

[44] John Paul II, *Address to the Thirty fourth General Assembly*, 1153.

[45] John Paul II, *Address to the Thirty fourth General*, 1157.

[46] GS=Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudem et Spes* (7 December 1965).

[47] John Paul II, *Address to Bengt O. Johansen, Ambassador of Norway to the Holy See* (18 December 1997), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XX (1997), 2:1049.

Human person received an incomparable and inalienable dignity and rights from God and strives to recognize the same in everyone and in every situation (RH 14). Since man is created in the image of God, there is a reflection of God, the creator, the definitive goal and fulfilment of every person in everyone. "The person, including the body, is completely entrusted to himself, and it is in the unity of body and reason that the person is subject of his own moral acts" (VS 48). It should be understood that every person is endowed with responsibility and freedom "as a personal being and also as a community and social being" (RH 14). Thus human persons have "the right to share in the building of society" (SRS 15), in creating a social order worthy of his dignity and rights. And society itself arises out of the dignity of the human person and reaches beyond society. "A single human soul is worth more than the whole universe of material goods. There is nothing higher than immortal soul, save God. With respect to the eternal destiny of the soul, society exists for each person and is subordinate to it."[48] Pope reminds that persons even with disabilities are fully human subjects, with dignity, rights and duties; they affirm more clearly the dignity and greatness of man (LE 22). This entails the requirement that every person be respected of their equal dignity and rights by political and social institutions because human dignity and human rights are rooted in the sanctity and quality of human life.

The protection of human dignity and rights is one of the imperative requirements of the common good. The society should acknowledge that it is at the service of its members and their natural aspiration to find fulfilment as individuals and social beings. The common good of a society is brought to full realization only when all citizens are sure of their rights (RH 17). But when they are ignored or violated, the common good vanishes or diminishes by the pursuit of the individual's interests.[49] Justice and peace for all comes from respect for the human dignity and rights of each individual member of a society. A just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person as its end. Human person therefore cannot be used as a means to be manipulated by coercion or denial of human rights, for carrying out economic, social or political projects based on self interests. The recognition of human dignity and rights can only make the common and personal growth of everyone possible in every community and whole of humanity.

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[48] J. Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre-Dame-Indiana, 1946, 61.

[49] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 378.

John Paul II appreciates the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights, adopted by United Nations as "a true milestone on the path of humanity's moral progress,"[50] and "one of the highest expressions of the human conscience of our time."[51] They are universal, inviolable, and inalienable without exception of time, place or subject because they are inherent in the human person and in human dignity.[52] They correspond to the fulfilment of the essential needs of the person in the material and spiritual spheres and to every stage of life and to every political, social, economic and cultural situation, directed towards the good of the person and society.[53] The declaration draws attention to a number of essential features of human rights, emphasizing the recognition of the innate dignity of all members of the human family as well as the equality and inalienability of human rights as the foundation of liberty, justice and peace. "Together they form a single whole, directed unambiguously towards the promotion of the good of both the person and society."[54] Such recognition of human rights should also establish a "culture of human rights:" "Only when a culture of human rights which respects different traditions becomes an integral part of humanity's moral patrimony shall be able to look to the future with serene confidence."[55]

John Paul II also regards that the promotion of the human rights includes the right of peoples and nations (SRS 33, CA 21), which rests on the equal respect to the States, for each one's right to self-determination and for their free cooperation in view of the higher common good of humanity.[56] The rights of the nations are nothing but human rights fostered at the specific level of community life. Therefore the common good of a nation consists in its fundamental right to existence, to its own language, and culture, through which people express and promote its fundamental spiritual sovereignty to shape its life according to its own traditions to build its future by providing an appropriate education for the younger generation.[57]

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[50] John Paul II, *Address to the Thirty fourth General Assembly,* 1147- 1148.

[51] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly*, 732.

[52] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 379.

[53] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 379.

[54] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 379.

[55] John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the 1999 World Day of Peace*, 385.

[56] John Paul II, *Letter on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Second World War* (4 September 1989), in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XII (1989), 2:384.

[57] John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly*, 736.

8. Conclusion

From the above discussion it is clear that John Paul II presents a clear vision of the concept of the common good and arguments in favour of defining it as a moral category of determining interpersonal and interdependent human relations for solidarity, upholding human dignity and human rights. It is a constructive approach to foster the material, moral and spiritual well-being of humanity in a holistic manner. In his approach much focus has been given to the principles, virtues and values appropriate to assume the common good. His approach provides a virtue and principle–based approach to personal and social well-being. Thus it is a normative approach to the common good. Since there are also other approaches to the common good,[58] we observe certain missing elements in his approach to the common good.

Given the complexity of the concept of the common good and in the context of an acute awareness of the growing diversity of vision of good life by peoples around the world, some authors have expressed epistemological scepticism, arguing that a shared or common vision of the common good is impossible.[59] And in the recent times the developments of social choice and collective choice approaches to the human community and social arrangements brought forward the contract paradigm as the dominant against the covenantal paradigm.[60] His approach follows covenantal paradigm. A balanced approach between these two paradigms would be more compatible to solve the complexity of the concept.

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[58] C. Pagliariccio provides different approaches to define the common good such as: Normative, descriptive, Strong normative and weak descriptive, weak normative and strong descriptive, etc. Thus he argues that defining the concept of the common good has many possibilities. See C. Pagliariccio, "*Sognare, apprezzare e condividere il bene*". *Una vsione psicoeducativa per la promozione del bene comune*, in P. Carlotti-G. Quinzi et al., *Alla ricerca del bene comune: Prospettive teoretiche e implicazioni pedagogiche per una nuova solidarità*, LAS, Roma 2008, 197-231.

[59] J. Rawls has proposed that in the context of present diversity of the world, a shared vision of the good is impossible. While J. Shklar argues that any pursuit of comprehensive vision of the good will be at the expenses of those who lack the power to define or enforce their own definition of the highest good. See J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University, New York 1996; J. Shklar, *Ordinary Vices*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1984.

[60] A. Cortina provides the categories of two paradigms: contract and covenantal, and interprets that contract paradigm the human relations are understood to be artificially created on the basis of free, calculating reasons of individuals; in contrast, a covenantal paradigm sees humans a social by nature. She argues those both are essential and are complementary. See A. Cortina, *Covenant and Contract: Politics and Religion*, Peeters, Leuven, 2003.

Secondly, in the formation of the concept of the common good itself, individual participation is fundamentally important. The recognition of the voices of the people is one of the foundational resources and approaches in social ethics in the contemporary political theories.[61] J. Merkle argues, peoples' participation in the truth of values such as equality, respect, and dignity will provide ethical guidance in social life. In John Paul II's approach of the formation of universal principles and values, particular virtues should also see its role in terms of conscious, public practice of specific virtues among its members.[62] The principles and values describing the common good do not pertain to a person's character nor is proper attention given to provide a way to move toward the concrete realization within real persons for them to embody them. John Paul II, instead of examining social systems, whether social systems measure up to the standards of the common good, the focus should have been to clarify the proper organizational shape of the society insisting on the participation within the dialogue about the common good.

Thirdly, John Paul II argues mainly for the principle, value and virtue of solidarity as commitment towards the common good. But the simultaneous practice of solidarity needs along other virtues as to transform personal life as well as social structures. C. P. Vogt argues, along with solidarity, many other virtues like compassion and hospitality are important for social concern.[63] Likewise, M. Nussbaum insists on the cultivation of compassion first towards those near us then moving forward towards others instead of care for everyone at once.[64] Therefore solidarity alone in isolation from other virtues cannot achieve the common good. Though John Paul II does not treat solidarity as an isolated virtue or value, he provides no explanation on cultivating it in individual formation. There should be balance between the universal concern and individual formation.

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[61] M. Elsbernd argues that peoples' voices is the most crucial of foundational resources and approaches of social ethics and it is not enough that the voices are heard but also should be accepted, published and promoted including in describing the common good. See M. Elsbernd, "Social Ethics," *Theological Studies* 66 (2005), 137-158.

[62] See J. Merkle, *From the Heart of the Church: The Catholic Social Tradition*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002, 242.

[63] See C. P. Vogt, "Fostering a Catholic Commitment to the Common Good: An Approach Rooted in Virtue Ethics," *Theological Studies* 68 (2007), 394-417.

[64] M. Nussubaum, "Can Patriotism Be Compassionate?" *Nation* 273, 20 (17 December 2001), 11-14.

Fourthly, John Paul II's definition of the common good links it to the human rights. With regard to his concern for the human rights much importance is given for the grounding of the human rights and defence of the inviolable rights. The argument for the specific means and ways of obtaining them is ignored. Grounding of the human rights has to be supplemented with specific means of obtaining them. Moreover, John Paul II relies on Universal Bill of Rights, legislation and the policies of political powers to safeguard and the promote them. Thus the participation by the people in formation and obtaining the rights remains vague.

The common good is neither just as a question of material well-being or economically well off or of having more social and economic freedoms. Above all, it is human development; of better interpersonal human relationships, naturally good, friendly and loving in their interpersonal encounters. It is the quality of life worthy of human dignity expressed in mutual respect for freedom and rights. It is a question of moral option for principles, values and virtues in developing the structures of society and thus making all the conditions suitable for self-fulfilment as individuals and as communities. It is based on the truth of human person and his destiny. In the context of the globalised world, increasing secularization and rising global economic crisis, the Pope recommends an ethical vision that places priority on the common good, through solidarity for the respect for human dignity and rights. It demands, a constant and continuous conversion of making oneself a good and responsible neighbour to each other to build up better interpersonal and interdependent human relationships. It signifies that we rise above the individualism and commit ourselves to the common good by constructing a culture of values, virtues, of responsibility and fraternity to make our society a better place for ourselves and for all.

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PERMANENT REVOLUTION AND PERPETUAL PEACE
Revisiting Kantian Cosmopolitanism

Roy Varghese Palatty◆

1. Introduction

We live in a globalized cosmopolitan world. Solitary conception of one's existence is not only limited in its existential boundaries they set up, but it is dangerous to the humanity as a whole. Kantian theory of cosmopolitan right is considered as one of the most important philosophical origins of modern cosmopolitan thought. He did not, of course, invent either the idea or the name of cosmopolitanism, which he drew from the ancient Stoics and rediscovered in the interstices of modern revolutionary movements.[1] But his great achievement was to transform it into a philosophical principle of the modern age based on the notion that nationalism was a sign of human immaturity and enslavement to the passions and that 'genuine principle of

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◆**Roy Varghese Palatty** is a research scholar at the Catholic University, Leuven. He holds a Master's Degree in Commerce (Kottayam) and a Licentiate in Philosophy (Bangalore). He is a prolific writer and his published works include *Cathedrals of Development: A Critique on Amartya Sen's Developmental Model*, 2009.

[1] The term 'cosmopolitanism' has apparently a Cynic origin: To the question where he had come from Diogenes, the Cynic replied, "I am *cosmopolitan*." Diogenes did apparently mean to assert that the local affiliations were of lesser importance than a primary affiliation to humanity. He insisted on defining himself, primarily, in terms of more universal aspirations and concerns, although he was apolitical in his style. The Cynic background was historically very important for Stoics, which influenced later Greco-Roman cosmopolitan thought. The central difference between Kant and the Stoics is that the search for peace requires, according to Kant, a persistent vigilance toward an ineliminable human aggression, while for the Stoics aggression is a consequence of unwise attachments to external things and persons. The Stoics thought that the life of the cosmopolitan, and the cosmopolitan concerns with goals of world cooperation and respect for personhood, may be difficult to sell to citizens who are hooked on to local group loyalties. The life of the world citizen is, in effect, as Diogenes the Cynic said, a kind of exile! There is no evidence to see that Kant has been influenced by Cynics, but his influence of Stoics is almost univocally accepted. This point is discussed in Martha Nussbaum, "Kant and Cosmopolitanism," in *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*, James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, eds., Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999, 25- 53; also in "Kant and Stoic Cosmopolitanism," *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 1 (1997), 1-25. Here, Nussbaum traces the debt Kant owed to ancient Stoic cosmopolitanism.

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right' necessarily points toward a 'universal law of humanity,' which would transcend the nation-state. As Hannah Arendt rightly commented, one becomes a member in the world community by the fact of being human – one's "cosmopolitan existence."[2] Each human being dwells in two communities: one, the local community by birth and second, the community of human argument and aspiration. While answering the question on nature's 'final design,' Kant, in no means unequivocal, argues that it is nothing but "a cosmopolitan whole."[3] However, cosmopolitan right is also seen as a banner or label under which powerful nations conduct wars against their enemies and portray them as enemies of humanity itself. Carl Schmitt, who subscribes to such a view, believed that the *moralization* of war under a cosmopolitan flag has a close affinity to the *totalization* of war, since it turns the enemy into an 'inhuman monster' who 'must be definitely annihilated.'[4] In the same way, Hegel makes critique on Kant's theory of cosmopolitan right on the ground of its 'fixed conception' as regressive and non-nationalistic, where all the particularities of the nation-states are subsumed and eliminated. It seems however, Hegel's attempt was not abolishing Kant's cosmopolitan theory, but rather advancing Kantian framework beyond the formal natural law. Kant's theory of a cosmopolitan order was not merely an idealistic irrelevance to the realist play of power politics, nor was it a moral trap or an exercise in self-delusion. It was rather a philosophical expression of a determination to resist the pressures of nationalism, overcome the external violence of modern state, and turn the idea of universality into a concrete reality.[5] Cosmopolitanism as Kant proposed is to be defended against 'spiritless radicalism,' as Arendt aptly called it, albeit on the understanding that Schmitt's destructive criticism is justifiable inasmuch as it captures 'what is' from the standpoint of power politics.[6] As Kant rightly says, "political moralists" can always produce the contrary by fashioning morality to suit his own advantage as a statesman.[7]

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[2] Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Ronald Beiner, ed., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 75.

[3] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 53.

[4] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976, 15.

[5] Robert Fine, "Kant's Theory of Cosmopolitanism and Hegel's Critique," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 29, 6 (2003), 609-630.

[6] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, San Diego: Harvest, 1979, 326-40; cited in Fine, "Kant's Theory of Cosmopolitanism and Hegel's Critique," 611.

[7] Immanuel Kant, "Appendix" in *Political Writings*, Hans Reiss, ed., H. B. Nisbet, trans., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, 118.

In this essay, I analyze Kantian Cosmopolitanism under three perspectives: first, *Sensus Communis* as its foundation that Kant developed in his *Critique of Judgement*;[8] second, republicanism and perseverance for peace as inevitable part of realizing cosmopolitanism; and, third, a critical evaluation on whether his effort is purely a 'spiritless radicalism' as some of his opponents, including Hegel, thought.

2. *Sensus Communis*: Foundation for Cosmopolitanism

The centrally uniting principle of *purposiveness without purpose*[9] that Kant identifies and extols in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* is located in the capacity of *sensus communis*, which is translated, as Arendt says, "common sense."[10] Commonsense is not common, but communal. It helps to develop and accept plurality and thus, co-exist with 'large-mentality,' which is the outcome of imagination. It is a communicable cultural feeling that humanity is said to share universally, and the source of all that sees the beauties of nature as adapted to our powers of cognition as well as to the free play of our imaginative faculties in harmony leading to purposiveness. This common sense, according to Kant, is essential. Without it the subjective elements of cognition, morality, and imagination would remain independent. Hence an individual would almost reduce the knower to the status of scepticism. A common platform is necessary in order to facilitate communication, which in turn, is essential for any type of communicable cognitions. For Kant, this platform is provided by a *sensus communis*, based on which the mental states of individuals can be universally communicated. This also includes the communication of feelings that underlie aesthetic judgments.

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[8] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 61. For this discussion I depend on Arendt's reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Beiner, however, argues that Arendt was clearly wrong when she states that Kantian political philosophy must be reconstructed from the third *Critique*, because his real political philosophy remained unwritten. Kant's politics is strongly shaped by his moral vision in contrast to what Arendt suggests. Her version of Kantian politics is obsessed with Platonically defined philosophy, although Kant himself has his own version of Plantonic influence. For post-critical Kant, morality is situated firmly in the province of reason, not in that of taste. Ronald Beiner, "Re-reading Hannah Arendt's Lectures," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 23, 1 (1997), 21-32.

[9] According to the *Critique of Judgement*, while "the purpose (*Zweck*) is the object of a concept, insofar as the concept is regarded as the cause of the object (the real ground of its possibility)," purposiveness (*Zweckmässigkeit*) is "the causality of a *concept* in respect of its *object*." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Paul Guyer, ed., Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, transl., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 5: 220; For this discussion see Saju Chackalackal, *Unity of Knowing and Acting in Kant: A Paradigmatic Integration of the Theoretical and the Practical*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2002.

[10] This functional translation may be contrasted with the stand of Onara O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Exploration of Kant's Practical Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 45, where she rejects "common sense" as well as "community sense" (opted by Arendt in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 70), and opts instead "public sense."

Common sense, according to Kant, is an understanding of sharable mutuality and intersubjective communication that leads to actual community. Although there is no theoretical or practical necessity with regard to the aesthetic judgment by which everyone *feels* the same liking for the object perceived as beautiful, there is a subjective necessity, "i.e., a necessity of the assent of *all* to a judgment which is regarded as the example of a universal rule that we cannot state."[11] This universal assent of the judgment of taste, though not objectively necessary in itself due to the lack of conceptual employment, demands "the agreement of everyone else, because we have for it a ground that is common to all."[12] It is this common ground that Kant terms *sensus communis*. Kant says:

> "*Sensus communis*," however, must be understood the idea of a communal sense, i.e., a faculty of judging [*Beurteilungsvermögen*] that in its reflection takes account (*a priori*) of everyone else's way of representing in thought, in order as it were to hold its judgment up to human reason as a whole and thereby avoid the illusion which, from subjective private conditions that could easily be held to be objective, would have a detrimental influence on the judgement.[13]

Thus, identifying *sensus communis* as a reflective faculty of estimation available to humanity, Kant takes it to be our *inner ability* to make judgments of taste. In other words, it is a power to assess the success of the judgment of taste by considering whether a particular actual feeling derived from the aesthetic judgment is shared or not. Establishing and cultivating the ability of *sensus communis*, according to Kant, take place by way of three general rules or conditions of thinking. These are conditions of acting as well. "They are (1) to think for oneself [the maxim of enlightenment, as Arendt says]; (2) to put ourselves in thought in the place of everyone else [the maxim of the enlarged mentality]; and (3) always to think consistently [the maxim of consistency – *mit sich selbst Einstimmung denken*]."[14] Apart from their moral significance and the helpful hints they offer for living with one another in a society, they tend to the *sensus communis* and set the ground for a proper response to the judgment of taste. The need for individual autonomy and self-legislation that marks the basis for a responsible rejoinder in evolving and catering to an intersubjective or universal form of community – a cosmopolitan community – is reflected in these 'maxims of common human understanding.' Plurality of viewpoints cohabits in a coherent and peaceful manner.

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[11] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §18, 5:237,122.

[12] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §18, 5:237, 122. Kant holds that aesthetic judgment is the property of the humanity, exercised in a community, and never in solitude. "In solitude man is very indifferent to the beautiful... Beautiful form seems to exist only for society... When we are alone, we never attend to the beautiful." This is because "sociability is the cause and motivation of taste." Cited in Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of* Taste, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979, 26-27.

[13] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §40, 5:294, 173-74.

2.1. Plurivocity for Enlarged Mentality

Thinking for oneself is a maxim that calls for an active reason which can defend itself by engaging in unprejudiced thought. Despite the necessity of the common sense, Kant does not allow any chance of reducing the individual participants to a mere passive state of accepting the reasoning of others. Instead, he demands that all those who form part of the community have to be persons, who are able to think for themselves, whose thinking and judging ensue from their own independent reasoning.[15] Indeed the rational independence of these agents implies that there is a plurality of viewpoints (I call it *plurivocal* against univocal). Yet Kant, with his second maxim, posits a dynamic interrelation that is possible within this plurivocity. Here, it is very important to reflect why Kant stands for republicanism. He contends that republicanism must replace despotism, where a state is governed by laws derived from the private will of its ruler, eliminating the plurality of views, in individual states. Genuine independence, in Kant's vision, does not amount to absolute individualism; nor is it a call for transferring ourselves to the standpoint of others. Assuming the common character of our feeling and thought, Kant calls for adopting the maxim of "enlarged thought" so that a person is able to disregard "the subjective private conditions of his own judgment, by which so many others are confined, and [to] reflect upon it from a *universal standpoint* (which he can only determine by placing himself at the standpoint of others)."[16] This basically facilitates communication among individuals, by which one's own initial judgments can be approached and debated from the perspective of others, and, thus, possibly a lofty position can be arrived at. This, however, is not a given position but each individual has to arrive at by constantly engaging in the process of thinking (for oneself) and by shifting those grounds to the universal standpoint. So reasoning is not individualistic but includes and permits accessibility to others. This results in the necessity of the final maxim of consistent thought. The constant interface between individual and intersubjective dimensions of thinking involved in gradual developmental process has to be infused with consistency at both levels. It is said to be a disinterested and an unending task – a philosophical task – the attainment of which is possible only "by the combination of both the former, and after the constant observance of them has made them automatic."[17]

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[14] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §40, 5:294, 174; Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 71. These same principles are laid out elsewhere and there they are given as "general rules and conditions of the avoidance of error," and are called enlightened, enlarged, and consequent or coherent, respectively. Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Victor Lyle Dowdell, transl., Hans H. Rudnock, ed., London: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978, 95-96.

[15] Chackalackal, *Unity of Knowing and Acting*, 476.

The need to transcend the limits of subjectivity and thus to ascribe universal validity to the judgment of taste are grounded in the fact that human beings share in a common responsiveness. Kant held that "this common sense is assumed ... simply as the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our knowledge;"[18] its intrinsic necessity deriving specifically from the common sense and not from the object involved. Paul Guyer clearly expresses the value of communication with regard to the aesthetic judgment in the following passage:

> A beautiful object pleases us because it is an occasion for communication and because we have a natural disposition for communication, the satisfaction of which brings us pleasure. On this account, the absence of society precludes the judgment of taste,

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[16] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §40, 5:295, 175. Arendt argues that to think with an enlarged mentality means one has to train his or her imagination to move beyond the boundaries. It is the same reason why, as Arendt opines, Kant takes the line of the spectator, not the actor as such. Being a "citizen of the world," a *Weltbetrachter* – a world-spectator – Kant looks to the world beyond territorial limits, which made him even to limit himself to travel less, and satisfied with reading travel reports! See, Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 42-44.

[17] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §40, 5:295, 175.

[18] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §21, 5:239, 124.

> obviously enough: such a judgment makes a claim on the agreement of others, and can be made only on the basis of experience of others and their preferences. Their absence thus makes the judgment of taste logically incoherent and practically impossible. But the absence of others is also taken to deprive one of one's own pleasure in a beautiful object. Without anyone to share its experience with, Kant holds, one can have no "proper enjoyment" of the object itself, precisely because its pleasurableness lies in the fact that it is an occasion for communication. On the theory that it is the communicability of a mental state rather than the harmony of knowledge with its object which causes aesthetic pleasure, the conditions of both aesthetic response and aesthetic judgment are the same – namely, those which ground the possibility of communication.[19]

In line with the maxims, then, the judgment of taste requires a constant conciliation between individual and community, thus facilitating a progressive communicability within the community of taste.

2.2. Rationale of Reflective Communication

Kant introduces rational communication as that which relates humans and caters to the social spirit of the mankind. The reflective activity of *sensus communis*, which manoeuvres for a relation between imagination and understanding without the mediation of concepts, can be effective only if formal communicability is possible. "Everyone expects and requires from everyone else this reference to universal communication [of pleasure], as it were from an original compact dictated by humanity itself."[20] This is possible by way of constituting a shared world of action for one another through the exercise of our own freedom, which requires that the maxims of *sensus communis* are fulfilled. As Arendt states, "you must be alone in order to think; you need company to enjoy a meal."[21] Facilitating such a communication among responsive individuals is an attempt to treat them as ourselves, but in their own right, where they are not objectified or treated as a means for certain ends, but as individuals sharing the same faculties and abilities as we have, and ultimately as end. It is important to note that rational communication and mediation never compromise Kant's foundational principle on man "as the ultimate end."[22] Yet it promotes common understanding among peoples of pluri-form views and initiates them to work for the future. Such a unity cannot be identified as extreme uniformity, but rather mutual search for a common ground. Kant argues:

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[19] Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 26; see also Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §9-10.

[20] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §41, 5:297, 176.

[21] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 67.

> The art of reciprocal communication of ideas of the most educated part with the cruder, the coordination of the breadth and refinement of the former with the natural simplicity and originality of the latter, and in this way to discover that mean between higher culture and contented nature which constitutes the correct standard, not to be given by any universal rule, for taste as a universal human sense.[23]

The maxims of *sensus communis* shed light on our ability for the aesthetic judgment, which requires that our consistent thinking – individually as well as collectively – forms us into members of a community. Here, in this union, the aesthetic taste becomes a reality and the unifying ground of human cognition and practice. It must be noted that more than something readily given, *sensus communis* is an ability, or an *inner faculty* that we have to acquire and advance by way of our continued effort of rational self-disciplining. Consequently, the unifying principle of *purposiveness without purpose* can be actualised in the realm of aesthetic activity. Such an experience of unity can be realized only in a republican form of government and constitution.

3. Republicanism as Locus of Unity

Kant strongly believed that a republican constitution and government can bring the desired peace in the world. Every republican constitution is based on three fundamental principles: the principle of *freedom* for all members of a society, the principle of the *dependence* of everyone upon a single common legislation, and the principle of legal *equality* for everyone as citizens.[24] These three rightful attributes are inseparable from the nature of a citizen. Kant argues that the emergence of republican states – representative democracies – is crucial and unique for realizing peace:

> For if by good fortune one powerful and enlightened nation can form a republic (which is by its nature inclined to seek perpetual peace), this will provide a focal point for federal association among other

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[22] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §83, 5:430, 297.

[23] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §60, 5:356, 229-30.

[24] Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 94; "The Metaphysics of Morals," in *Political Writings*, 139. This point is elaborated in, Leslie A. Mulholland, "Kant on War and International Justice," *Kant-Studien* 78, 1 (1987), 25-41.

> states. These will join up ... securing the freedom of each state in accordance with the idea of international right, and the whole will gradually spread further and further...[25]

This can be realized in the context of a federation of states, which is not like a world government however, but a union of republican states. On Kant's account, republican states can function as focal points of peace. This is because in these states, "the consent of the citizenry is required in order to determine whether or not there will be war, [and] it is natural that they consider all its calamities before committing themselves to so risky a game."[26] Kant continues to argue that despotic states, to the contrary, easily go for war because their rulers need no public consent and usually can avoid the ravages of war. Republican states promote 'public use of reason' in order to facilitate the moral and political engagement of their citizens and thus are more likely to seek for lasting peace.[27] "Perpetual peace is *guaranteed* by no less an authority than the great artist *Nature* herself (*natura daedala rerum*)."[28] Kant's claim on republic is not something empirically tested but rather something like an "*a priori* necessity."[29] There must, he believed, be an "absolute sovereign agent which can force each of us to obey a universally valid Will under which everyone can be free."[30] Nature can never impose a duty to promote perpetual peace, which is at the heart of his cosmopolitan idea, only practical reason can do that. Kant, however, argues that at the political, international, and cosmopolitan level, Nature guarantees what man ought to do, without prejudice to the 'free agency of man.'[31] Kant's argument is obviously conservative as one might expect from a philosopher who denied the right of revolution and affirmed the obligation to obey the law.

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[25] Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 104.

[26] Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 99.

[27] Kant, "Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," Ninth proposition, in *Political Writings*, 51-53.

[28] Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 108.

[29] Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," §45, 138. Kant argues that the legislative power can belong only to the united will of the people. All rights are supposed to emanate from this power; the laws it gives must be absolutely *incapable* of doing anyone an injustice. It is just like the *veil of ignorance* theory of John Rawls, who developed his theory of justice under Kantian transcendental understanding of contractarian approach.

[30] Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," §46, 139.

[31] Kant addresses this question at three levels: political, international and cosmopolitan levels. In the political area, the mechanism of Nature would result in the creation of the state even by 'a nation of devils.' The antagonism of men will make them compel one another to submit to the coercive laws of the state. In the area

There is historical evidence that prolonged human struggles have led to exhaustion and disgust with war, that the longest period of peace in Europe was the result or end served by the Napoleonic Wars. In the twentieth century, World War I resulted in the creation of the League of Nations and World War II in the creation of United Nations. As a moralist, Kant hoped that the results of the mutual antagonism of men would lead to seek an institutional protection of peace in the form of federation of states.[32] Here, wealthy nations and their citizens are duty bound to assist developing nations in their endeavour to eliminate poverty, hunger, preventable diseases, premature mortality, and illiteracy. These are hindrances to individual autonomy, and one aspect of the duty to respect other humans as ends in themselves is to promote the conditions of their autonomy. Improved conditions of autonomy facilitate political progress and thus help the cause of peace. Hence, assistance in the struggle against poverty, hunger, and so forth, in developing countries may be seen as a way of satisfying the duty to promote republicanism in foreign nations for

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of international right, the separate existence of many independent states is essentially a state of war unless there is a federal union to prevent war. Linguistic and religious differences, as provided by Nature, will prevent the emergence of a single world power; although they will initially provide a pretext for war, eventually the growth of culture will contribute to mutual understanding of peace. In the area of cosmopolitan right, Kant believes the "spirit of commerce," which eventually takes hold of people, will further the cause of peace. "Perpetual Peace," 108-114. In the present world, we see just the contrary to what Kant proposes. The contemporary gurus of *The End of History and Last Man* (Fukuyama) and *Clash of Civilizations* (Samuel Huntington) subscribe for the opposite by showing the empirical fragility of the society, where individuals are divided on the basis of different civilizations they belong to and hence, one takes the sword against the other. Despite large scale transactions and trade networks in the present world, the market-driven globalization produces a fragmented society with haves and the have-nots. I believe, however, that we can never subscribe for the teachings of the prophets of doom even if there are difficulties to understand the Kantian cosmopolitan 'utopia;' we hope for the better!

[32] Teleology, of course, falls into disrepute when thinkers 'reify' Providence or Nature and claim to have discovered their real ends or purposes in history. Kant avoids this trap and sees teleology as a regulative principle which serves as a source both of empirical hypotheses and moral aspiration. Kant maintained that the teleology of nature is something internal, not external. See Burleigh Wilkins, "Teleology in Kant's Philosophy of History," *History and Theory* 5 (1966), 172-185.

the sake of peace.[33] Kant wrote that the task of establishing a universal and lasting peace "is not just a part of the theory of right within the limits of pure reason, but its entire ultimate purpose."[34] Everybody is obliged to act in accordance with the idea of such an end of perpetual peace: "for this is based upon duty, hence also upon the rights of man and of states, and can indeed be put into execution."[35] Kant's ultimate hope lay not in the formation of a single world government – as Arendt points out, "Kant knew quite well that a world government would be the worst tyranny imaginable"[36] – but in a federation of states, a federation which would be furthered by states committed to what Kant called "republicanism,"[37] which corresponds roughly to what we call liberal democracy.

Kant, however, believed both in the 'rights of man' and in the 'rights of states,' which sets him apart from cosmopolitan liberals on the one hand and political realists on the other. He believed that all states are moral personalities, and I think this is the lynch-pin of his claim that states should not intervene in the affairs of other states. When we think of intervention we often think of military intervention and of wars of conquest, but, as Kant realized, intervention can take a variety of forms, and states may be acquired in a variety of ways. For example, states may be acquired by inheritance, exchange, purchase, gift, or by marriage; and in all of these transactions, Kant believed, the subjects of a state are used or misused as objects to be manipulated at will. A state, according to Kant, is "like a tree, it has its own roots, and to graft it on to another state as if it were a shoot is to terminate its existence as a moral personality and make it into a commodity."[38] He believed that every state is a moral personality, which is constituted by social contract. It means the autonomy of a state, like that of individual person, should not be suppressed by force or influence. But, in reality what happens is the opposite, if not always. Although the political psychology of certain states is just contrary to what they do on contractual agreements, they just do it fearing of their isolation and possibility of getting lost in the market-place. Kant defines a state as "a union of a multitude of men under principles of justice."[39] If we use the language of modern-day discussions of collective responsibility, for Kant the state is not a mere aggregate of persons, and that the union to which he refers is that of an organised collective. Kant defines moral personality as "nothing but the freedom of a rational being under moral laws,"[40] while a psychological personality is simply the ability to be conscious of one's self-identity. But, a state as moral person living with and in opposition to another state is a condition of natural freedom. This freedom is also a condition of continual war. States like individual persons can have rights and duties, and these rights and duties obtain in relation to their own subjects, although Kant thinks the duties states owe to their own subjects are not coercive duties. Thus, the republican federation of states is Kantian transcendental ideal in the political sphere, where states mutually share and help and thereby it ensures global basic structure in economic, political and social realms.[41]

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[33] Poverty and inequality can certainly make a person outraged and desperate, and a sense of injustice, related to particularly gross inequality, can be a ground for rebellion – even a bloody revolution. In looking for underlying causes of war, the economics of deprivation and inequity has a very plausible claim to attention. Amartya Sen gives a detailed account and argues that peace cannot be actualized unless adequate attention to the problems of poverty and inequality is given. See, "Violence, Identity and Poverty," *Journal of Peace Research* 45, 1 (2008), 5-15.

[34] Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," 174.

[35] Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," 170.

[36] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophly*, 44.

[37] Ideally, for Kant, all states should be republican in both spirit and form, but some states may be republican in spirit and not yet in form. An example for Kant was the Prussia of Frederick the Great which was republican, that is, representative, in spirit but not in form.

[38] Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 94.

4. Cosmopolitan Ideal: Spiritless Radicalism?

The philosophy of history is meant precisely to set in place a political philosophy, however marked by a natural teleology it may be. It is true that this political philosophy is not a philosophy of political judgement. It is limited to articulating the political task assigned to the human species as a natural finality. The very expression "a cosmopolitan point of view" shows the singularity of this hinge point. As Paul Ricoeur says, "the nine theses of the essay [Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View] are meant to establish, degree by degree, the conditions of possibility of the transition from natural teleology to world citizenship – from *cosmos* to *polis*, we might say."[42] Kant's point is looking for a

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[39] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, John Ladd, trans., Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965, 77.

[40] Kant, *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, 24.

[41] John Rawls develops this point in his *Law of Peoples*.

[42] Paul Ricoeur, *The Just*, David Pellauer, ed., Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000, 101.

'transition.' He says, "we are here concerned not with philanthropy, but with *right*. In this context, *hospitality* means the right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else's territory."[43] Hence, "the idea of a cosmopolitan right is therefore not fantastic and overstrained; it is a necessary complement to the unwritten code of political and international right, transforming it into a universal right of humanity. Only under this condition can we flatter ourselves that we are continually advancing towards a perpetual peace."[44] It means humanity is by nature capable of constant progress towards peace and improvement without forfeiting its strength. Here, the very movement of nation-states to cosmopolitan ideal is considered to be an important element of progress.

At the same time, cosmopolitanism as 'fixed position in opposition to the concrete life of the state' makes history as a "superficial play of contingent and allegedly merely human aspirations and passions."[45] Hegel's critique of cosmopolitanism was directed at Kant's *abstraction* of cosmopolitan right from the actuality of social and political life. He commented that "perpetual peace is often demanded as an ideal to which mankind should approximate" and that a "league of sovereigns" is proposed to settle disputes between states.[46] Hegel did not reject the demand for peace or the institutional means Kant designed to achieve this end, but he could not accept Kant's formulation of the relationship between means and end. He argued that a league of states is as likely to construct its own enemies as an individual state: "....the state is an individual and negation is an essential component of individuality. Thus even if a number of states join together as a family, this league in its individuality must generate opposition and create an enemy."[47] Here, the powerful sovereigns can decide a common enemy and ask the humanity to fight against it as it is the enemy of all. The propensity to war shown by states in isolation is changed but not overcome when they combine into a league or federation. Kant stipulates that 'reason absolutely condemns war' but such a minimalist conception of cosmopolitan right makes no mention of other, potentially competing aspects of cosmopolitan right – those to do with social justice, poverty, inequality, democracy, etc. If these elements are not seriously considered the absolute notions of cosmopolitan rights, perpetual peace remains an utopia. Kantian "judging spectator" is profound with 'large mentality' but sometimes, it neglects the role played by the "engaged actor."[48] Kantian cosmopolitan right may tend to bypass the radical responsibilities within the social world although "destination of the human race is perpetual progress."[49]

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[43] Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 105-06.

[44] Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 108.

[45] G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Allen W. Wood, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, §209, 240.

[46] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §324, 361. The hypothetical 'social contract' theory follows the line of thinking started with Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century and later developed by John Locke, Rousseau and Kant. The advanced versions of these aspects are seen in the works of John Rawls. However, many thinkers including Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum argue that such a 'transcendental institutionalism' can do less for the realization-focused approach to justice. See Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, New York: Penguin Books, 2009.

[47] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §324, 362.

Hegel's popularly viewed criticism against Kant's abstract cosmopolitan order can be seen in his analysis on nationalism and patriotism. Hegel questions Kant's association of nationalism with immaturity and blind passion by exploring the rational foundations of patriotism within the modern system of right. Hegel argues that patriotism is "a consequence of institutions within the state,"[50] i.e., it is a result of the rational structure of the modern state and not an error of thought or blind emotion. Actually, Hegel was not against the cosmopolitan outlook as such, but he emphasised the need of nationalism as a pre-requisite for developing patriotism. Hegel criticised Kant only for turning cosmopolitanism into a 'fixed position' in opposition to the 'concrete life' of the state. He, on the other hand, argues that the basis of modern patriotism lies in the disposition of citizens to trust that their interests are preserved in the interests of the state and that their freedom is secured in their conformity to state institutions. The source of such a trust has to be found out in the rationale of state institutions that helps the society to keep away from meaningless absolutism and rationally ordered bureaucracy.[51] As to the argument that republicanism is conducive to peace because rulers cannot go to war without consulting the people and the people are more cultured and therefore less prone to violence than in traditional political orders, Hegel observes that in republican states responsibility for the command of the armed forces and for making war and peace still usually lies with the 'supreme commander.' In many instances, the rights of the states may not get protected in a universal will with constitutional powers over them, but they are nonetheless actualized in their own particular wills. At the time of war, states continue to recognize one another reciprocally as states, which mean that they are obliged to wage war in such a way as to preserve the possibility of peace.[52] Here, the sacrifice of the individuals in a society is considered as nothing but merely instrumental military machines, where individuals fall under 'one among many,' and thus, the individual liberty and respecting individuality is subsumed in the universal.[53] Although republicanism gives space for *sensus communis* and enlarged mentality, when it takes the form of universal federations, the individual differences can be annihilated.

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[48] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 48.

[49] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 58; this point is elaborated in pages, 55-59, 75-77.

[50] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §268, 288.

[51] Fine, "Kant's Theory of Cosmopolitanism and Hegel's Critique," 617.

5. Conclusion

Despite the factual evidence and the every-day drama played on the streets of the world history is just contrary to the radical conception of cosmopolitan right, it is in no way make one, I believe, to be a cynical realist or a conservative pessimist. Kant argues that it is not possible to decide through experience whether the human race's history shows it be improving morally, getting worse, or vacillating endlessly between good and evil. Yet he makes clear that the only way we can look at this question is by looking at *our vocation to better ourselves* – both individually and collectively. Kant believes that the milestone event that constitutes a "historical sign" that humankind is progressing towards Good is nothing else, but "enthusiasm or the passion."[54]. Kant argues that politics and morality, which have incompatible agreement in the public power politics, can come to an agreement within a federal union, which is therefore necessary and given *a priori* through the principles of right.[55] However, by transforming utopia (perfect place) into eudemonia (wellbeing), we look for solutions in terms of individual and societal development and progress than through imposition of institutional framework. Realization of cosmopolitan ideals presupposes certain transcendental institutions in order to pursue for justice and peace. But, in reality, this kind of ideal conception may not guarantee or not even functional from a practical point of view. The institutions and the models of institutions mostly take care of the 'insiders' alone. Kant rightly says that unconditional hospitality makes the stranger as member of the native household, at least for a certain time. He strongly believed that scattered human race could be brought together under a single umbrella of "cosmopolitan constitution" and that alone can bring perpetual peace on earth. Kant has to go miles in order to reach such a passionate idea of "universal community."[56]

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[52] Fine, "Kant's Theory of Cosmopolitanism and Hegel's Critique," 620.

[53] Hegel explains this point by reference to wars of coalition waged by England against France, observing that "the entire people has pressed for war on several occasions and has in a sense compelled the ministers to wage it...Only later when emotions had cooled, did people realize that the war was useless and unnecessary and that it had been entered into without calculating the cost." *Philosophy of Right*, §329, 365-66. It was almost the same when America gone for military invasion of Iraq in 2003 by declaring war against terrorism. Even if considerable favourable arguments can be made from the decision-makers such an act in the history marks an indelible scar. See Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 2-3.

[54] Kant, *The Contest of the Faculties*, in *Political Writings*, 183. Kant explains enthusiasm as "the attitude on the onlookers as it reveals itself in public while the drama of great political changes is taking place: for they openly express universal yet disinterested sympathy for one set of protagonist against ... present" (182).

Peace would not be lasting if it did not take into account the need for economic redistribution and protection for basic human rights, for which the present international laws or institutions with contractarian framework may not be enough. Even the best attempts by the social contract tradition to solve these problems – John Rawls, Thomas Pogge and Charles Beitz – prove insufficient guides to the complexities of the issues we face. Our attempts to make global economic institutions like World Trade Organization or World Bank to form a kind of economic global network and thereby make a universal community terribly failed the purpose. Moreover, in commerce and trade relationships certain under-developed states are instrumentally used by developed states, which have greater amount of voice in the market. It is true, however, that a universal community that Kant visualised becomes meaningful and relevant where "moral politician" wins over the "political moralist." Kantian march toward human progress and perpetual peace includes also a perpetual war, an eternal war for an eternal peace.

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[55] Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 129.

[56] Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 106-07. Kant looks for a universal community of love, where "a government ... established of benevolence towards the people, like that of a father towards his children. Under such a *paternal government* (*imperium paternale*)..." Kant, "Theory and Practice," in *Political Writings*, 74.

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BOOK REVIEW

Elaine Craddock, *Siva's Demon Devotee: Karaikkal Ammaiyar*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010, pages xii + 193; ISBN: 978-1-4384-3087-4.

This book is a scholarly study that penetrates into the ancient, medieval, and modern Tamil culture, literature, and religious nexus. The reader of the book would be attracted to author's systematic, precise and deep insight into Tamil Saiva tradition revolving around the life, work, and devotion of and devotion to *Karaikkal Ammaiyar*. *Karaikkal Ammaiyar* is a saintly Tamil poet who was the first to write a devotional poetry to Siva in Tamil language. The author deserves praise for his in-depth and painstaking effort both in integrating field (empirical) and academic (scholarly) research in order to comprehend Saiva tradition and the role of *Karaikkal Ammaiyar* in promoting this tradition. The reader is inspired and invited to go into the details about the uniqueness of Tamil culture and literature.

The first chapter focuses on the Tamil landscape and human behavior embedded in Tamil literature, especially in Tamil poetry. *Tolkappiyum*, later known as "*Cankam*" literature, and *Tirukkural* are the major Tamil literary works. These are long poems, which depict ancient Tamil culture and religious attitudes of the people of the time. They have *akam* and *puram* literary devices to cover the cultural and religious overtones of the milieu. The *akam* represents the love poetry and the *puram* represents the praise poetry in honour of heroes and kings. Nature and culture are not opposed to each other but together they give meaning. The geographical landscape is the map of human self; they reveal human emotions, thoughts, and desires. We see in the Tamil literature the fusion of North Indian and South Indian cultural and religious elements. The bhakti movement emerged in the North from Vedic traditions and flourished in the South. The *Saiva Sidhantha* originated in Central and North India and spread to South India by the work of Brahmins and Agamic school. Now it exists particularly in Tamil Nadu. While Agamic school gave emphasis to ritualism, the Tamil Saivism gave importance to devotion and spiritual knowledge. The *Sidhanta* upholds a dualistic philosophy where there exist Siva and individual souls; the individual souls achieve liberation through praising Siva by way of proper conduct, ritual actions, disciplined meditation on Siva, and, thus, by achieving supreme knowledge of Siva.

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Tamil poetry consists of interplay between bhakti and philosophy. Karraikkal Ammaiyar introduced first post-classical meter in poetry, which is known as *kattalaik kalitturai*.

The second chapter goes deeper into *Karaikkal Ammaiyar*'s poetry and its influence on a new emerging devotional community. This devotional community is not based on caste or gender but on devotion. Path becomes goal; devotion becomes liberation from karma and rebirth. We see in this chapter how devotion to Siva emerged in Tamil landscape. Siva was originally a Sanskrit god who was localized and was considered as a fitting response to other emerging religious traditions like Jainism and Buddhism. Ammaiyar's poetry synthesizes the themes of earlier *Cankam* poetry where the description of desolate places as the abode of powerful demons (powers personified) and cremation ground being a desolate place as a venue for dancing Siva to whom the devotees submit in worship. In short, Siva becomes the meeting point of awe and love.

The third chapter deals with the biographical and hagiographical details of Karaikkal Ammaiyar. She, originally named Punithavathi, was the wife of a rich merchant Paramatattan and an ardent devotee to Siva. A hungry Saiva devotee came to her residence one day. She gave the devotee one of the two mangoes that her husband had sent home to be kept for him. Later, when her husband came home she served him the other mango. The mango was very delicious and her husband asked for the other mango also to be served. As Punithavathi was in a dilemma, she prayed to Lord Siva and astonishingly by God's grace a mango appeared in her palm which she served immediately. This mango was more delicious than the first and the husband enquired about it and Punithavathi explained what had happened. The husband became afraid and considered her to be a woman with special powers. In fact, her devotion to Siva saved her from an embarrassing situation that would have made her husband suspicious of her honesty. Knowing eventually the supernatural powers of Punithavathi he left her and got settled with another family. Learning about this later developments Punithavathi dedicated completely to be the *pey* (devotee) of Siva. This chapter is developed from a strenuous work of the author collecting a variety of information about Ammaiyar from various sources, both written and oral traditions, and gave an authentic account of her life and devotion.

The fourth chapter deals with two towns associated with Karaikkal Ammaiyar. The first town Karaikkal is considered as the birth place of *Ammaiyar*. There is a temple that is dedicated to Ammaiyar which arranges an annual mango festival commemorating the mango miracle that triggered Punithavathi's transformation to Karaikkal Ammaiyar. The other town is *Tiruvalanikatu*, which is associated with the Saiva tradition promoted by Ammaiyar. Ammaiyar, in her poetry, highlights the importance of this place as an arena to witness the dance of Siva. This chapter describes how Ammaiyar's devotion progressed as a path to her liberation. This chapter is a reflection of experience, imagination, and cultic elements associated with Ammaiyar.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to Ammaiyar's poetry itself. It is translated with annotations that would help the reader glimpse at the originality of her poetry. A reader would understand the poetry even if it is not in the original language.

Siva's Demon Devotee is a historical book as it gives a brief but sufficiently detailed background to Tamil landscape, culture, and religious allegiances. This is also a storybook where a reader is fascinated by the descriptive but captivating accounts of various mythological or legendary elements of cultural and religious heroes of Tamil Nadu. It may also be considered as a hagiographical or biographical work, as it portrays in detail the life and work of Karaikkal Ammaiyar, a celebrated Tamil poet-saint.

The unique and valuable contribution of Elaine Craddock is the escalation of the unique role of women with respect to devotion and literature from the historical and cultural past of Tamil landscape. He invites every reader to acknowledge this unique but forgotten role of women in otherwise a patriarchal society. Moreover, this book is a very good guide to the students of religion, culture, and literature.

Vinoy Paykattu

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